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NKHANI ZATHU

OUR NEWS - UNITED NATIONS IN MALAWI QUARTERLY JOURNAL



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TAKULANDILANI

The United Nations' mission in Malawi to support Malawi to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and contribute to equitable economic growth and poverty reduction.

We work with Government, forging partnerships with donors organizations, non-government organization, civil society, national and local leadership to strengthen the accountability systems and improve delivery of quality social services to every man, woman and child.

We believe Malawi has the potential to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, with national ownership and commitment, and the of policies, resources and global partnership

The UN family comprises of 8 resident and 8 non-resident UN agencies. We are over 500

staff with an average annual disbursement of approximately \$75 million.

What impact on the lives of people in Malawi does this wealth of human and financial resources bring? How should we measure our impact? It is not good enough to measure inputs - the number of staff, projects or funds mobilized. Nor should it be only outputs, say pumps, medicine distributed or the number of people trained or of workshops. It should be outcomes. That means how things actually change. For us in the UN system that should be about improving the quality of peoples' lives, measured through the human development index and progress towards achievement of the MDGs.

Once we know how we measure our impact, we need to be sure that we are using our human and financial resources in the best

possible way to achieve that impact. Given that even our considerable resources are limited in relation to the country's needs, first we need to focus on a limited number of priorities, and second work together to deliver results in those priority areas. Delivering as one - with one leader, as one team with one programme - means one objective; that every man, woman and child will enjoy a healthy and productive life.

Nkhani Zathu is a journal of the journey we are taking, sharing our experiences and encounters along the journey, putting a face to numbers, facts, figures to often drawn out UN-speak. It chronicles our efforts in Malawi, the impact of these efforts and the opinions from within and without on how we are fairing. Takulandilani, Welcome.

The Editor

FROM THE RESIDENT COORDINATOR'S DESK



These are extraordinary times for Malawi. Politically, we are going through some serious turbulence. Economically, a second year of bumper harvests has boosted activity and comes on the heels of Malawi getting debt relief upon reaching HIPC completion point in 2006. The year before, rich countries promised to double aid to Africa by 2010. Doubling of aid seems unlikely, but aid levels to Malawi are gradually increasing.

As a result of good management, the budgetary envelope available to the Minister of Finance to run the Government, promote economic growth and pursue activities that reduce poverty has increased. The issue is now whether political and constitutional differences will result in a logjam that undermines the 'dividend' and affects the poor. It would be tragic, for example, if the fertiliser and seed subsidy scheme is derailed. The UN stands ready to help unblock the situation.

Events in Malawi take place against a global backdrop of unprecedented momentum behind efforts to reform the UN system. Member States, rich and poor, want to see the UN at the heart of development. They believe that the nature of the problems the world is facing, including poverty, inequity, climate change and insecurity, need solutions from and through the UN, both at the global, regional and country levels. The overall message is that the UN, as a system, must get its act together and marshal its resources in a more effective and efficient way to address these pressing problems. In short, the UN must 'deliver as one'.

The most motivating aspect of the reform effort is that much of the initiative is coming from developing countries. Eight have stepped forward to be pilot countries, including four in Africa (Cape Verde,

Mozambique, Rwanda and Tanzania). Malawi, as you will see in this Newsletter, wants to be next (see 'Delivering as One').

The message coming from reform-minded Governments is loud and clear. They want, and expect, the UN to become their primary partners in helping them manage and achieve results with development resources. It will mean new ways of working, and working more effectively together. It also means being more focused and aware of the unique contribution we can make - and the partnerships we need with others, whether in civil society or the donor community.

Our job as the UN is to encourage and support Malawi to achieve the MDGs. The Government's top priority is economic growth. Investment in people, especially women and children, their health and education, their environment and work, their ability to have their voices heard, is central to economic growth, as repeated success stories in other parts of the world have shown. It is also central to achieving human rights and human dignity.

We are rising to the challenge. The new UNDAF describes the ways in which we are going to work together to help Malawi achieve her development goals. It results from thousands of hours work and discussion by many, many colleagues in a process unprecedented for its openness. On behalf of the UNCT, I want to recognize and thank all those involved - you know who you are!

The Business Plan is the UNDAF's twin: it sets out the ways in which we will ensure that the UN system makes maximum use of its resources and staff in the coming years. Its implementation will require leadership from the OMT and the support of every staff member, including programme officers, drivers, finance officers and registry staff.

We are lucky in Malawi to have such a strong UNCT with a good team spirit, committed and willing to explore new ways of working together. The challenge before us, and before Malawi, is huge. But I am confident we are on the right track.

Michael Keating, Resident Coordinator



PERSPECTIVE

Why Malawi wants the UN to change

United Nations is part of Malawi. It was here at independence and has played a fundamental role in Malawi ever since. It helped us draft the constitution and set up the National Assembly and other constitutional bodies. It has supported the passage of laws that guarantee human rights, gender equity and the rights of the child and helped us with the capacity to implement them. It supported our decentralization process, elections, the Vision 2020 exercise and strategic plans in sectors ranging from agriculture and the environment, trade and public sector reform, to orphans and maternal mortality. So many key institutions in this country were designed and established in partnership with the UN, including the National Statistical Office, the Malawi Investment Promotion Agency, the National AIDS Commission and many other bodies.

The UN continues to play a major role in helping us avoid and respond to emergencies and famines.

But the aid environment is changing. Under the terms of the Paris Declaration, we want more resources to go through the Treasury as direct budget support or to be put behind sector plans, for example in health, agriculture or education as sector budget support. Many donors are willing to do this if we can prepare results oriented, measurable plans supported by strong accountability. That means we need to strengthen our procurement, project management, coordination, monitoring and reporting systems, among other things.

We want the UN to help us with this. This means the emphasis should not be on individual projects but on helping us to develop sectoral plans and to strengthen our capacity to coordinate, manage and implement them. As with the donors, we expect the UN to reduce the 'transaction costs' it represents for us in terms of having separate requirements, for example reporting, procurement and M&E. Obviously this is a big challenge for the UN, with so many different agencies and



activities, and when Ministries sometimes wants the UN to support stand alone projects or initiatives. But it has to be done.

So we are delighted that the UN Country Team is now moving ahead with 'delivering as one' and positioning itself to support us achieve the Paris Declaration. Success in doing this could really help the Government manage development assistance and to achieve the MDGs.

Hon. Goodall Gondwe
Minister of Finance



Referee, Score Keeper, Bench Warmer or Valuable Player?

Halfway to the 2015 target date to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, Malawi's progress is mixed.

Good rainfall patterns and the government's bold agricultural input subsidies programme resulted in two consequent years of bumper harvests and improved poverty levels and food security. The focus now is to diversify produce and increase irrigation as Malawi remains largely dependant on rain fed agriculture. Savings and micro-finance facilities are marginal. People need to access credit to improve their standards of living, and engage in economic activities, and especially women.

The MDG on reducing child mortality is on track but maternal mortality rates are among the highest in the world. These fatalities can be halted with simple measures including immunisation, distribution of mosquito nets, prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV and proper nutrition. Pregnant women need contraception to avoid unplanned pregnancies, skilled attendance at births, functional referral systems, timely and quality emergency obstetric.

With clean water and sanitation, we can reduce the appalling numbers every year who suffer from cholera and other water borne diseases.

Primary school enrolment has increased to 80%, and the ratio of girls to boys in primary and secondary schools increased to 1.05 and 0.85 respectively. But almost half a million do not complete primary school education, especially girls and orphans. The quality of education needs attention. An average class has more than 100 children.

The fight against HIV and AIDS is making remarkable progress. The ART programme in Malawi has one of the highest coverage in Southern Africa, with 100,000 people are on ART from less than 10,000 at the end of 2004. Prevalence rates in urban centres have declined slightly but rural areas are reporting high rates.

Parliament passed the Domestic Violence Bill in 2006 and the Wills and Inheritance Act is pending in parliament. More women are playing an active role in mapping out their

future and accessing equal opportunities. The majority of women are in rural areas, which remain underserved by social services and marginalised.

The United Nations have a responsibility to advocate for national ownership, monitor the progress and support the Government in addressing the constraints to achieve the goals. Question: Are you we just keeping the score, warming the benches or ensuring every thing we do has an impact of every man, woman and child in Malawi?

From the next issue, we explore progress, constraints and milestones towards achieving the development goals for Malawi and the UN's collective role. We will invite opinions from within and outside the UN on their perspective on the UN's role.





DELIVERING AS ONE

One Leader, One Programme, One Team

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) is a five-year programming tool, which aims to strengthen the impact and efficiency in delivery of development activities by the UN.

Preparation of Malawi's UNDAF was delayed by one year to ensure that it could benefit from and be aligned with the [Malawi Growth and Development Strategy](#). It was prepared with Government and other partners and will be subject to annual reviews by a joint GoM/UN Steering Group.

The UN system has committed to achieving 16 Country Programme Outcomes clustered into five priority areas drawn from the MGDS. Each cluster is headed by a Convenor acting on behalf of the Resident Coordinator for the whole UN system – that is, not just on behalf of his or her agency. An inter-agency team, with one agency in the lead, will tackle each of the outcomes.

The UNDAF Structure

Preparation, development and implementation of UNDAF 2008 – 2011 is managed by a Joint UNDAF Steering Committee, which consists of the Government to provide the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy perspective and the UN Country Team lead by the Resident Coordinator. A joint UN M&E Group manages Monitoring and Evaluation of UNDAF.

UNDAF Cross Cutting Task Forces

Gender, Disaster Risk Reduction and Human Rights are relevant to the five priority areas. For each cross cutting issue, a task force will ensure these issues are in focus when achieving the 16 outcomes. The convenors are Ms. Esperance Fundira (UNFPA) for Gender, Howard Standen (UNDP) for Disaster Risk Reduction. A convenor for Human Rights will be decided shortly.

Cluster 1: Food Security and Economic Growth

Convenor: Mazlan Jusoh (FAO)

Cluster 2: Social Protection and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)

Convenor: Domenico Scalpelli (WFP)

Cluster 3: Social Development

Convenor: Aida Girma (UNICEF)

Cluster 4: HIV and AIDS

Convenor: Desmond Johns (UNAIDS)

Cluster 5: Good Governance

Convenor: Maha Bahamdoun (UNDP)

For more details on the outcomes, visit: http://www.unmalawi.org/un_mal_undaf1.html

The UN Business Plan

The Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) has been supporting the UNCT to develop an overall plan within which we will move forward with 'Delivering as One'. The Business Plan has seven work streams.

- Work stream 1** One Programme UNDAF 2008-2011 - UN priorities, all programmes, joint programming, monitoring and evaluation and UNDAF status report
- Work stream 2** Common UN Services
- Work stream 3** UN Harmonisation and Alignment
- Work stream 4** Joint UN Communication and advocacy
- Work stream 5** UN Disaster and Humanitarian Coordination
- Work stream 6** Common UN Premises
- Work stream 7** Resource Mobilisation UN Business Plan

'Delivering as One' and Staffing

It is quite understandable that many staff will be wondering whether and how UN reform in Malawi will affect them personally. One of our objectives is efficiency – does that mean less staff and the prospect of job cuts?

UN reform is not a cost cutting exercise. It is about deploying our human resources as effectively as possible, cutting down on duplication and increasing common services. The move to common premises when, eventually, it takes place will allow an opportunity to combine forces in a number of areas, programmatic as well as administrative.

In the next issue of Nkhani Zathu, we discuss what UN Reform in Malawi means to staff.



Why Reform

"The true measure of the success for the United Nations is not how much we promise, but how much we deliver for those who need us most". UN SG, Ban Ki-moon

"A more united System will be a stronger, more responsive and effective United Nations. A System reconfigured to optimally use its assets and expertise in support of country needs and demands will strengthen the voice and action of the UN in development, humanitarian assistance and the environment. A repositioned UN – delivering as one – will be much more than the sum of its parts." The UN SG's High-Level Panel on UN System wide coherence

In January, eight countries began piloting "Delivering as One", testing how the UN family can deliver in a more coordinated way at the country level. Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uruguay and Viet Nam reflect broad spectrum in size, income and the range of UN activities. The High Level Panel, a group of heads of state and policy makers who examined ways to strengthen the UN's ability to respond more effectively and efficiently, recommended the pilots.

Over the next year, the UN Development Group (UNDG) and Member States will evaluate the pilot programmes to determine extension of the approaches to more countries.

In February, UN Secretary General confirmed to H.E. the President of Malawi the Malawi would be part of the second wave of pilot countries to implement the 'Delivering as One' initiative, from 2008. The President's recommendation for Malawi to be a pilot country is his recognition of UN's support in Malawi and the signal for the UN family to move decisively forward with UN reform at the country level.

We have begun the reform process and are moving closer towards the establishment of One Leader, One Programme, One Team, One Budgetary Framework.

UNDG released the first issue of FORMULA 1, in April, a monthly, UN staff newsletter with updates from the eight pilots. Find the current issue at <http://www.undg.org/>

You can also keep track of the progress in the countries by visiting their individual sites.

- Albania www.un.org.al
- Cape Verde www.cv.jo.un.org
- Mozambique www.unsystemmoz.org
- Pakistan www.un.org.pk
- Rwanda www.unrwanda.org
- Tanzania www.untanzania.org
- Uruguay www.un.int/uruguay
- Vietnam www.un.org.vn



FEATURE

An Ordinary African Village

Malawi currently hosts almost ten thousand refugees from its African countries. The country's two refugee camps are a lot different from the images shown in news broadcasts and Hollywood films. Dzaleka resembles an ordinary African village; with shops, markets, and bustling street life. They even have football pitches, bars, breweries and television rooms.

The United Nations High Commissioner administers Malawi's two refugee camps, Dzaleka and Luwani, for Refugees (UNHCR). The UN General Assembly established the UNHCR in 1950. In the immediate aftermath of World War II more than 1.2 million people across Europe were left without a home – the founding of the UNHCR was proof of the global community's commitment to solving that problem.

Originally, the UNHCR was given a three-year mandate to help resettle the European refugees and thereafter extended every five years, until 2003 when the UN General Assembly finally made a commitment to remove the time limitations on UNHCR's mandate – until a final resolution is found to the refugee problem.

Today UNHCR's staff of 6,500, help 20.8 million refugees in 116 countries. Over the last half century, the agency has assisted more than fifty million people and received various recognitions – including two Nobel Peace Prizes, in 1954 and 1981.

Drastic change

Malawi received the first refugees in 1989, approximately 1.2 million Mozambicans during the crisis – one of the largest numbers a single country has ever hosted – and successfully repatriate the entire group. Malawi opened its doors to other African refugees in 1995.

Malawi is currently home to around 9,500 refugees. There are two refugee camps in the country; 5,500 people live in Dzaleka, which is located near the capital Lilongwe, and 2,800 in Luwani, 350 kilometres south of Lilongwe, near the Mozambican border. Approximately 1,200 refugees are scattered around Malawi's cities.

The lives of Malawi's refugees are in the process of changing dramatically; in late April, the Malawian government ordered the closure of Luwani camp and its inhabitants transferred to Dzaleka. The decision was prompted by an increasing concern at the number of asylum seekers from the Horn of Africa, who claim asylum, but then cross the border into Mozambique heading for South-Africa. The huge undertaking has already begun. The first group of refugees was transferred on 20 June.

Mr. Ngoma, Assistant Camp Administrator of the Dzaleka camp, admits that receiving 2,800 additional people to the camp will be a huge undertaking, but which he believes will be managed accordingly. "I do not think that the new people will have major trouble blending in. Of course there are always problems when people live together." the biggest challenge now is to provide building equipment, learning and health facilities.

Bars and bustling street life

Malawi's two camps are not anything like the stereotypical refugee camps. In the movies and on the news you see miserable fenced off areas, where people live in blue UNHCR tents and sit around idly all day. Those who carry such images in their heads are in for a surprise – Dzaleka camp is set up like a small village; with shops, markets, and bustling street life. They even have football pitches, bars, breweries and television rooms.

Roger is a Burundian who works as a barber in the camp. He charges twenty kwacha for a haircut and makes two hundred a day. "I think that the conditions are all right here, but there is not enough food distributed. We always finish the rations before the end of the month." Roger is a keen swimmer but says that he has not been able to practice his favoured sport since he came to Malawi a few years ago.



The first thing you notice when entering Dzaleka is the number of children; there seem to be curious children running around everywhere, many of them chasing a football. The children look strong and healthy, and they are certainly loud. It takes guts to uproot and settle in an unfamiliar country, facing an unknown future. The children seem to have inherited the toughness from their parents; they generally do very well at school. Luwani secondary school, which also hosts Malawian children from the surrounding area, is one of the top schools in the country, with refugee children top of the class.

Engaging the community

Dzaleka camp is divided into five zones, each with their own leader. As we arrive, all the leaders are seated in the Camp administrator's office, discussing the upcoming arrival of the refugees from Luwani. The leaders are from different countries - Rwanda, Burundi, Ethiopia, Somalia and the DRC – and as many women as men.

The refugees themselves take an active role in the running of the camp. The community leaders have regular meetings with the camp administrator to discuss any problems and possible solutions in the camp. There are also various committees for issues such as HIV and AIDS prevention, gender development, gender based violence and a recreational committee that organises sports teams and events. "We have football and basketball teams. There are even organised games against different Malawian teams", says Cecilia Banda, a Red Cross administrator in Dzaleka. She also thinks that the gender development committee is doing an admirable job. "They have been focussing on helping women get started with businesses. A group of women actually opened a restaurant in the camp recently."

Malawi's refugee camps are set up as ordinary communities. That the camp institutions such as schools, hospitals and nurseries also serve the Malawian communities in proximity is a testament to that. The hospital in Dzaleka has one clinical officer, two clinical assistants and two nurses, but no qualified doctor. "The services are free for everybody but most of the patients are Malawian", says Ms. Banda. It is estimated that around four percent of the Dzaleka inhabitants are HIV/Aids positive, much lower than the national average. Although the same institutions serve Malawi's citizens and the refugees, their status is different. The refugees need permission to leave the camp.

A new life

The Malawian Police Force usually has a presence of four officers in Dzaleka. Ms. Banda expects their workload to increase significantly with the arrival of the refugees from Luwani "I expect some problems. We will probably see an increase in HIV and AIDS and possibly in gender based violence. There are limited resources to tackle the problems that might arise." Ms. Banda does have strong opinions on the roots of social problems. "Most human rights abuses stem from alcohol and drug abuse. So these, along with idleness, are the problems we need to combat."

Continued on page 8.



MASEDA 3.0. Malawi's most comprehensive database on human development

"If you can't measure development, you can't manage it." Michael Keating

If you are looking for data by sector or geographic area presented in maps, graphs and tables, then you need **MASEDA 3.0** - the latest and most comprehensive human development database for Malawi. The mapping facility can produce 28 individual district maps showing Traditional Authority boundaries within each district map.



MASEDA 3.0 contains over 600 socio-economic indicators, which can measure progress of the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and sector-specific targets.

Without measurement tools, we cannot determine the impact of our development efforts. Using MASEDA 3.0, we can now prioritise development investment by region and sector, raise and allocate funds in a coordinated fashion to maximise results.

Malawi Socio-Economic Database (MASEDA 3.0) is a fundamental tool to promote evidence-based planning of development efforts and will enable

government departments, development organizations, civil society, research and academic institutions to access uniform information for coordinated planning.

National Statistical Office developed the first version in 2001 with 147 key indicators and launched a second version in November 2004. MASEDA is based on DevInfo software, which has been adopted globally by the UN as the format for national indicator databases.

MASEDA is one of the key components of a three-year Joint Programme on Monitoring and Evaluation, a US\$ 3.7 million partnership between Government and the UN System in Malawi, EU, GTZ, Millennium Challenge Corporation (USAID) and DFID. MASEDA is live on www.maseda.info and available on CD-Rom.

UN family remembers the lives lost to AIDS in Malawi



Candlelight Memorial is marked on the third Sunday of every May, to remember lives lost to AIDS.

In Malawi, about 84,000 people succumbed to AIDS related illness last year and close to one million adults and children continue to live with HIV and AIDS. It also strives to show support to our family, friends and colleagues living with HIV and AIDS and raise community awareness and decrease stigma related to HIV and AIDS. This year the UN joined in the memorial under the theme Leading the way to a world without AIDS.

The event was organised by UN+, which is managed by UN Helping Employees Living Positively (HELP) Coordinator, Ulanda Chilezi. The UN+ Mission is uniting for solidarity, equality and acceptance of people living with HIV within the UN system through awareness raising, policy change and advocacy.

School Feeding Programme targets 200,000 more children

Malawi has a high primary school enrolment rate of 80 percent, but half a million children or 16.1% do not complete primary education. A study commissioned by UNICEF in 2002, found that food shortages increased student absenteeism and dropout rates, particularly during the lean season between January and March. Almost 70 percent of children go to school without having breakfast, affecting their ability to concentrate and learn.

From January 2008, 635,000 primary school-going children will enjoy a nutritious meal of likuni phala every day. In addition, 114,300 girls and orphaned boys in standards 5-8 will also receive a monthly take-home ration of 12.5 kg of maize during the lean season, providing an additional incentive for their parents and guardians to send them to school.

The School Feeding Programme has increased enrolment rates and reduced drop out rates, particularly among girls and orphans. It is a Ministry of Education, Science and Technology initiative supported by World Food Programme.

In June, WFP's Executive Board approved the expansion of the Programme in Malawi to 672 schools in 14 districts from 442,000 children in 489 schools from January 2008 to December 2011.

Donors who have made the expansion possible include the countries of Algeria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Norway, Switzerland and United States of America as well as European Union, TNT, USA Friends of WFP and private donors.

Earlier, the United States Department for Agriculture (USDA) committed MK2.7



billion (US\$19.5 million), through the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program Award over the next three years.

WFP anticipates that the government will eventually take over the programme.



NEWS DESK

UN Supports Malawi's second successful national HIV Testing and Counselling week

Preliminary reports estimate that 150,000 men, women and children went for a HIV testing during the weeklong national Testing and Counselling Week in Malawi in July. The Ministry of Health estimated 130,000 people would take advantage of the campaign, based on last year's high turn out. Over 300,000 were already positioned in static and mobile testing sites countrywide.

Malawi's 2007 HIV Testing Week has been organised with assistance from the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malawi through National AIDS Commission, the United Nations System in the country, the US government among other donors as well as a host of non-governmental organisation involved in the planning, mobilisation and logistics.

The UN family supported the testing week, in its second year, as part of a wider programme to enable Malawi achieve universal access to HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support by 2010. Financial contribution to the tune of \$130,000 was provided for community mobilisation efforts, logistics, monitoring and documenting the exercise. In addition, 2 million condoms, including 500,000 female condoms were supplied.

At least 15 UN staff from the UN worked half or full time as part of committees, planning logistics and supplies and as part of the monitoring teams during the testing week.

The 2007 UN Millennium Development Goals report released in July by the Secretary General reports that Malawi's infection rates in the rural areas remain high, but the country had realised declines in HIV prevalence in urban areas.



(Top) Tenga and his wife Gilberta in the counselling room at Mitundu Community Hospital, 40 kilometres out of Lilongwe City Centre. (Above) Grace Banda works with Partners in Hope, a NGO providing health services in Malawi. She is part of a team supervising the testing and counselling week in Lilongwe Districts. Supervising teams monitored supplies, logistics and record keeping at all static and mobile testing centres in the District. In the pictures, Grace tops up supplies at a centre in Likuni.

Under the banner "Plan your future, go for a HIV test today", Malawi was the first in sub-Saharan Africa to come up with a national HIV testing week and the initiative received recognition at a recent HIV/AIDS Implementers meeting in Rwanda. The campaign attracted government officials from Lesotho, Swaziland and Kenya and representatives from CDC Atlanta, USAID Washington and the Global Fund who were in the country during the testing week to learn from this experience.

52,000 turn up for 2007 Walk the World in Malawi



WFP and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and its partners organised another successful 2007 Fight Hunger: Walk the World event on 13 May.

Thirty-three walks took place in 13 districts and 52,000 people took part in the walk, attracting 7,000 more people than last year. As at 24 May 2007, US\$ 10,000 had been raised through contributions and sale of visibility items. More funds are expected from organisations and individuals.

Pictures of the walk in Lilongwe

World Food Programme Promotes Local Procurement

For the second year running, Malawi has recorded a bumper harvest this year. World Food Programme says that it will buy more maize from local suppliers this year for use in its vital humanitarian operations in Malawi and other southern African countries. WFP strongly supports local procurement and will buy food aid locally whenever there are sufficient funds and food surpluses available. Local procurement assists farmers and stimulates the local economy as well as helping WFP to speed up the delivery of food aid to our beneficiaries.

So far this year, WFP has already purchased 41,000 tons of different food aid commodities from Malawi – 4,000 more tons than purchased in the entire 2006.

Since 2002, WFP has procured more than 160,000 tons of food commodities from Malawi, including maize, maize-meal, likuni phala, pulses, biscuits, salt and sugar. Over US\$ 38 million have been injected into the Malawian economy through local procurement with a further US\$ 10 million benefiting the local transport sector.

The bulk of this food has been distributed to vulnerable people in Malawi. WFP operations in neighbouring countries including Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe have received food aid purchased in Malawi.

Malawi's crops are becoming increasingly important to WFP's activities across the region. This year, half of the food that WFP has bought for its operations in southern Africa is from Malawi.





NEWS EXTRA

UN boosts Microfinance Sector in Malawi

In June, the [Government of Malawi and United Nations signed a micro financing project](#) that will contribute significantly towards poverty reduction by increasing access to financial services for poor and low-income population groups. UNDP and UNCDF have contributed USD 4 million to a USD 6 million basket-fund.

In Malawi, only 3% of the population has access to saving services while a marginal 1% access credit. Insurance services are virtually absent, and the percentage of poor families with access to any financial services in rural areas is even lower.

Nkhani Zathu spoke to Michael Keating, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative and Bill Chanza, Programme Analyst UNDP Decentralisation and Micro Finance/ UNCDF about the microfinance sector in Malawi.

Michael Keating (right)

“This project is strengthening the architecture of an inclusive financial sector in Malawi. Inclusive means creating opportunities for people who do not normally have them, particularly in rural areas

Malawi already has a number of micro credit institutions and this project aims to help these institutions improve their services and their reach. This includes Pride Malawi, which was started two years ago, through a UNCDF grant of \$3 million and now a key player. Their success and that of other institutions can be measured in terms of the increasing number of borrowers and the demand for the savings and loans services. Malawi’s financial sector is dominated by large banks but the service requirements of small savers and borrowers are not met.

Access to credit is a key driver for entrepreneurship and indeed economic growth, whether they are women in rural areas or street vendors. It creates opportunities to increase the enterprise base, improve the product or service and enable people to nurture better standards of living and definitely lift them out of poverty. And that is the UN’s objective in Malawi, human development.”



Bill Chanza (right)

“The three components of the project are policy formulation, innovation in services and capacity development. Firstly, the project will help the

Government develop micro finance policies to appropriately regulate and supervise the sector.

In the area of policies, which is UNDP’s competitive advantage, the project will help the Government develop micro finance policies to appropriately regulate and supervise the sector. This is about creating policies, which will promote the sector rather than undermine it and enforcing the legal framework of the sector.

Secondly, the project will support innovation in financial services and outreach. We want institutions to be creative to attract more clients especially in the rural areas. Examples include savings services, tapping agricultural markets, technology and electronic banking and lending packages. We want to see breakthroughs to increase access of these services to the poor.

The third component is capacity development. UNDP strongly believes in strong institutional capacities to support emerging demands of a developing nation. We are targeting key institutions including Reserve Bank of Malawi, which is the regulatory body and Malawi Micro finance Network, the collective voice for the sector, which needs support, particularly in developing Management Information Systems or MIS.

MIS is a major area of concern. Microfinance institutions are unable to increase the capital base because they lack proper data to demonstrate their viability and ability to pay back commercial banks from whom they borrow. They need to have the right systems to generate data and we hope this support with develop robust management information systems. Lastly, financial services providers including audit companies, training institutions and management consultants need to appreciate fully the dynamics of the sector so that their services are fine-tuned to the needs.”



Microfinance services including credit, savings, insurance and money transfers, yet they can raise standards of living and encourage entrepreneurship.

Continued from page 5

An Ordinary African Village

UNHCR seeks three different durable solutions for refugees in Malawi; voluntary repatriation, resettlement to a third country and local integration. In 2006, 59 Congolese, 35 Burundians and six Rwandans returned to their respective home countries. Six hundred refugees were resettled to various third countries - Norway, Australia, Sweden and Denmark. Local integration has, however been minimal, mainly due to the legal framework and a lack of resources. Roger, the Burundian barber, is not in doubt when asked which of the solutions he would prefer, “I dream of one day returning to my country”, he says.

As we prepare to leave Dzaleka, we stop by at a school building on the edge of the camp. Inside, around twenty young refugees are studying English with the Canadian national flag in the background. I ask why they are studying under a foreign banner “We are leaving for Canada this September. To study at university”, two of the boys reply. “And start a new life”, adds another.

The author, Jon Skafitson, recently completed his internship at UNDP. He was part of UN and Malawi government delegation that accompanied UN Resident Coordinator in Malawi, in June, to assess the movement of refugees from Luwani to Dzaleka.

Since May, UNHCR with the support of UN agencies has been working round the clock to move over 3,000 refugees from Luwani Camp to Dzaleka Camp. The implications include new shelter, reducing the interruption of school, food distribution and health services. Luwani is located near the southern border with Mozambique, while Dzaleka is near the capital, Lilongwe, in the centre of the country.

Visit www.unhcr.org to learn more about their refugee operations in Malawi and notes on the move. In marking the World Refugee Day this year, UNHCR highlighted the plight of refugees around the world, the courage it takes to be a refugee, as thousands displaced mainly by conflict search for a place to call home.



“STOP Child Abuse!” Malawi’s Children Demand

Mary* is only 15 years old, but she works for more than 10 hours a day as a domestic servant. She misses being in school, “I wish I could go to school and complete my education.” Just a year ago, while in grade 6 studies, she lost her parents to HIV related illnesses. Mary was taken by an uncle who promised to care for her, but instead, she became the servant, working in the home and farm. From 5.00 am to 9.00 pm everyday, she moves from one chore to another in a mechanical and detached manner.

Mary is one of hundreds of children in Malawi who continue to face abuse, violence and exploitation from the very people who should be protecting them. In June, UNICEF and the Ministry of Women and Child Development launched a national campaign “Stop Child Abuse” to raise awareness and lobby for enactment of laws that will protect children.

Stop Child Abuse Campaign launched

“The main aim of the campaign is to break the silence around child abuse. Violence against children, especially sexual violence, is often shrouded in secrecy and this makes it hard for any action to be taken to STOP it. We must speak out, we have been too silent for too long, and the time is now to say STOP it. Enough is enough!” said Ms Aida Girma, UNICEF Representative in Malawi.



Campaign material branded powerfully in red demands society to STOP practices that are not only criminal, but also permanently scar children, emotional and physically, impeding their healthy growth.

The campaign will involve open discussions between policy makers, service providers, children, communities and media on issues such as child labour, sexual abuse, child trafficking, early marriages and harmful cultural practices that continue to deny children their rights to a healthy childhood.

Hon. Kate Kainja Kaluluma, Malawi’s Minister for Women and Child Development, strongly decried the increase in cases of child rape and sexual exploitation in the country. “We have failed our children, and if we do not act now, we will be failing the next generation as well. We must say ‘stop child abuse’ and mean it. What is most frightening is that the people who are abusing children don’t even know it. When you take a 15 year old girl from her home in the rural area, and bring her to work

in your house as a domestic worker, or on the farm for more than 10 hours, that is child abuse!”

Abused by those who should protect them

At an event to mark the Day of the African Child in 2007, over 200 children from rural schools in Lilongwe marched to protest against violence and exploitation. At an audience with the Deputy Minister for Women and Child Development, Hon. Aaron Sangala, appealed to the government to make Malawi a safer place for children.

“How are we, children of Malawi, expected to thrive and excel in school when we continue to experience violence and abuse in the hands of the very same people who should be protecting us in school, at home and in the communities?” 16-year old Charles Kabera, a child parliamentarian expressed to the Deputy Minister.

Like thousands of children who have lost their parents to AIDS, Mary endures the long hours and mistreatment because they have nowhere to go. Ms Girma said that children by their very nature are vulnerable and orphans like Mary are particularly vulnerable to the violence of abuse, exploitation and neglect. “Cases of child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, in Malawi have been increasingly reported although hard data and reliable statistics are unavailable. The culture of silence at community and national levels means that the true scale of the problem is currently unknown.”

Child Protection in Malawi

Malawi ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1991 and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1987. Under these conventions, the government has an obligation to respect, protect, facilitate and promote the fulfilment of the rights that are enshrined in these conventions. These instruments and conventions must be translated into concrete legislation, interventions and development programmes.

The Child Care Protection and Justice Bill, Civil Registration Bill and the Wills and Inheritance Bill are still pending in parliament. The campaign will mobilize leadership and seek firm commitment at policy level for the enactment of these bills and the convention to afford greater protection of orphans.

“The absence of a specific law on child trafficking is a serious loophole that



undermines the global effort to stop child trafficking. Existing laws that address certain aspects of trafficking, such as kidnapping, rape or sexual exploitation, fall short of punishing perpetrators for the crime of trafficking itself,” says Ms Girma.

“Malawi has 4 million children living in poverty; at least 1.2 million children have lost one or both parents and another 1.4 million children are employed in hazardous child labour. We are failing these children if we don’t take action now, because we are denying them their right to realize their full potential because they are not in school,” Ms Girma adds.

* Mary is not the real name of the girl interviewed.

In pictures: UNICEF, Ministry and partners held a procession recently through the streets of Lilongwe and distributed campaign stickers to motorists. (Top picture) Hon. Kainja joined as part of campaigners.



FEATURE

Laying the Foundations of Democracy

Gift Phiri of NICE argues that in order for democracy to function, it is essential to tackle poverty and food security. Survival comes first, democracy second. In the Mtandire area in Lilongwe, this theory is practised, and can be replicated to the rest of Malawi's urban communities, according to John Chome of UN Habitat.

The National Initiative for Civic Education (NICE) was founded in 1999 by the Government of Malawi and the European Commission. NICE began as a pilot project to provide voter and civic education in the run up to the 1999 parliamentary elections. Today, NICE has established itself as an important partner for civic education, focused on the development of democracy and good governance in Malawi rather than a short-term intervention.

NICE works with local communities, helping people identify the issues affecting their lives, providing them with information on how to address these issues and supporting the creation of systems to put this knowledge into action. The people decide. NICE plays the role of a facilitator. "Democracy is a process. People will not worry about democracy if there is no food on the table," says Gift Phiri, representative of the district civic education officer for NICE in Lilongwe.

Consulting the community

In Mtandire, a low income and densely populated area in Lilongwe, NICE officers conducted a needs assessment after discussions with the residents. Poverty and hunger were highlighted as their main problem. Mr. Phiri describes NICE's methods as simple but effective. "We simply asked the community: how can we best address these problems? And then the community came up with the answers."

Irrigation was the best suited solution to achieve food security. So NICE, with help from European Union, provided the farmers with water pumps and farming tools. The farmers then set up special farming teams; the teams consist of ten to fifteen farmers, who work, share resources and seek ways to progress together. NICE also organizes seminars for the teams, to teach farmers basic business management skills including how to integrate their profits and using different marketing strategies. A volunteer from the local community is then chosen by the community to oversee the teams and provide NICE with "eyes and ears on the ground", as Mr. Phiri puts it.

Mr. Michael Keating, the UN Resident Coordinator for Malawi and Mr. John Chome, Programme Manager for UN Habitat visited Mtandire recently. Mr. Chome believes that this practise in Mtandire, and other similar initiatives can be replicated in other Malawi's urban communities.

"We recently awarded the Malawi Award for Human Settlements to Kang'oma, which is following a similar path to Mtandire", says Mr. Chome and adds that from a human settlement perspective, these projects are exemplary, where communities identify solutions to their problems.

Mr. Khombe opens a bank account

"I have eight children, my firstborn is a doctor and two of the others are teachers. Farming enabled me to support them through school", says George Salomon Khombe, leader of the Tasaukira Farming Team in Mtandire.

Mr. Khombe is an elegant man dressed in a white suit and blue tie. "I am a farmer not an office clerk. I knew I had visitors so I decided to dress up. This is my office," he says and points to a nearby tree. Mr. Khombe cuts an impressive figure, tall with greying hair and a moustache. He tells his visitors he was born in 1940, although he looks much younger – and has the vigour of a man in his thirties. He grows bananas, sugar cane, rice and vegetables, uses the soil to make ceramics and is considering setting up a fishpond on one of his fields. Mr. Khombe has been with NICE since the beginning. Through irrigation, he harvests bananas two or three times a year, instead of just once. "I would like to get better prices for my products," he says. Asked if he dreams of being able to access foreign markets, he answers, "Yes, but for that I need exposure. Maybe you can help me?"

The visitors decide

to buy some sugar cane from Mr. Khombe. Despite his office attire, he grabs a machete, jumps into the bush and cuts the sugar cane. The field is indeed his office. Later, he asks if he can get a ride into the city to go open a bank account.



Members of the farmers' team in Mtandire, Lilongwe explain to Michael Keating their extension plans. The teams are part of a NICE initiative.

Using locally available resources

In the village of Fumbe, soap production has become the hub of the village economy. After consulting with NICE, the women of the village suggested soap production as an interesting income generating activity. "Our role was to identify someone who could train the women in soap making. Eventually they were able to make soap on their own and then pass the knowledge on to other members of the community," says Gift Phiri. The women now sell soap on the local markets at a cost of twenty kwacha a bar.

Continued on facing page



Getting round, the local way. To access part of the area in Mtandire required wading through a stream.



SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT

Empowering Rural Orphans in Salima

For communities grappling with hunger and poverty, diseases such as malaria and HIV and AIDS compound their desperate predicament. Irrefutably, orphans are the hardest hit. With no guardians to care for them, they are often left destitute, forced to head families, fending for their siblings. With little or no education, no income opportunities or vocational training, their future appears bleak.

The SATECH project, executed by UNIDO, aims to secure the future livelihoods of poor, marginalized rural community members in Salima District and bolster their current humanitarian and productivity deficits. One of the project's core activities is providing artisan training and equipment. The SATECH project promotes a small community based organization, Maziko Orphan Training Salima (MOTS) to train orphans in various disciplines.

Since September 2006, MOTS Training Centre has benefited from tools, equipment, Training of the Trainers (ToT) and management advice. To date, 28 boys and 6 girls have successfully completed an intensive training in carpentry, welding, building, tailoring, motor vehicle mechanics and carving.

Upon their graduation in mid August 2007, they will receive tool kits. Most of them will chose self-employment in the rural community and possibly join the agricultural and informal sector. Others are likely to take paid employment in urban centres. All of them will be better equipped to help themselves and provide for their dependants.

The MOTS Training Centre is part of a wider programme that is contributing towards economic empowerment by uplifting the



economic status of vulnerable groups through integrated community programmes for income generation, training the disadvantaged groups especially women and orphans in business and technical skills, and promoting viable agro-based small-scale enterprises.

It is another step towards achieving Millennium Development Goals. The orphans programme is in tune with Government policies such as the National Action Framework for National AIDS Commission, which includes the mitigation of health, socio-economic and psychosocial impact of HIV and AIDS on individuals, communities and the nation.

In pictures. Trainers are MOTS Training Centre in Salima. Salima District is among the hardest hit by HIV and AIDS in Malawi and has high numbers of orphans.



Continued from pg 10

NICE depends fully on the communities it serves. All materials are local, and the income generating activities are based on locally available resources. Lack of local capital, however, is still the biggest hindrance to prosperity according to Mr. Phiri. He says that the local community has written applications for financial assistance to donors, and he is hopeful of some help being provided. "Financial matters are always a concern for us. If the people have food security, and are not poor they can fully contribute to the development of democracy in Malawi."

Replicating good practices

As well as helping Malawians develop successful businesses, NICE tries to embed the ideas and practices of democracy. NICE officers educate villagers on the principles of democracy, and the volunteers on the ground, themselves elected by the villagers, report back if those principles are practised. The results are clear; all the local chiefs are elected and a great deal of emphasis is put on the empowerment

of women. Female chiefs are not uncommon, and women are active participants in local politics.

NICE has a presence all over Malawi. The staff see it as their mission to be able to reach every village, in every corner of the country. Mr. Phiri says that it is crucial for NICE workers to reach even the remotest part of Malawi. He points to a stack of motorcycles outside the office, "All NICE workers travel by motorcycle because it can reach places a car cannot."

"A culture of democracy must develop from the grass roots level. That is why we preach to the villagers that everything must be decided by the community – nothing they do can be opposed to the principles of democracy. NICE is about laying the foundations for a democratic culture," Mr. Phiri proudly explains the work of NICE.

Jon Skafiason



www.unmalawi.org

ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS FAMILY IN MALAWI

There are eight resident UN entities in Malawi and several non-resident agencies more with projects and activities. The resident agencies are FAO, UNDP, UNAIDS, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP and WHO. UN Habitat, UNCDF and UNIFEM are represented by the UNDP Resident Representative. UN bodies with projects or activities in Malawi include IFAD, ILO, UNESCO, UNIDO and UNODC. The IMF and World Bank are part of the extended UN family.

Information on UN activities in Malawi can be found at our website www.unmalawi.org. The website also carries, breaking news, features and reports on new events and developments in Malawi. It has has a wealth of reference reports and publication.

Our mission in Malawi is to support the empowering of men and women so that they can knowledge and learned skills into individual and community action that will make a positive difference in their lives.

*We are introducing an online series, **AKATSWIRI** – heroes or champions - honouring men and women in Malawi as MDG heroes, for their passion and commitment in the unique role they*

play in tackling poverty, hunger, disease, social ills and illiteracy, challenging degenerative norms and behaviour - men and women making a real difference in their communities.

Read about Stafford Ndhlozi, the ambulance driver at Kasungu District hospital inspiring pregnant women and mothers and Traditional Birth Attendants who have now turned their attention and skills to encouraging pregnant women to deliver and seek pre and post natal care in health centres and hospital.

We are also looking for exciting and inspiring stories from every where in Malawi. If you have any contributions do send them to Nkhani.Zathu@undp.org.

NKHANI ZATHU is an online newsletter hosted on www.unmalawi.org and can also be downloaded as PDF copy. Printed copies are available on request. For subscription, article contribution or printing request, please contact, The Editor, nkhani.zathu@undp.org.

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You can contribute to the journal by submitting your articles or suggestions to a member of UNCG. The UN Communication Officer - Resident Coordinator's Office, is the Editor-in-Chief and manages the production of the newsletter.

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