



Statement

By

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United Nations**

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Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, allow me to extend my delegation's warmest congratulations to you, and the entire membership of the bureau on your appointment to lead this very important committee during the 71st Session of the UN General Assembly. Be assured that you have the full support and cooperation of my delegation. Let me also commend the outgoing Chairperson and members of the bureau for an excellent job in leading the 70th Session to its successful conclusion.

The Malawian delegation would like to associate itself with the statements made by the distinguished Permanent Representatives of Thailand, Zambia, and Bangladesh on behalf of G77 and China, LLDCs and LDCs respectively.

Mr Chairman,

In September of last year, all 193 members of this International Assembly gathered here and committed ourselves wholeheartedly to the work of ending poverty, protecting the earth, and ensuring that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The Agenda 2030 is not only an invitation to seek after the economic uplifting of the poor; it is also a universal call to seek after the thriving of all human beings regardless of background or geography. This is a call to action that Malawi is determined to answer.

At the macroeconomic level and in relation to the eighth Sustainable Development Goal, Malawi has undertaken several economic initiatives to address the persistently high inflation and the decline in GDP that we have experienced for two years running as a result of the region-wide El Nino phenomenon. Not only are we focused on dealing with inflation by tightening our monetary and fiscal policies, we are also accelerating the implementation of public service and public financial management reforms. Given the recent weather-related setbacks that Malawi has suffered, the government continues to give careful consideration to additional measures such as higher capital requirements, improved credit assessments, just to name a few.

Mr Chairman,

Malawi firmly believes that women are the core of any society's success. In this regard, we are not just signatories of treaties and charters that promote women's rights and gender equality. We are also actively integrating these policies into our national policies

including education programs to ensure that the girl child has equal access to education, information, services, and health care. Malawi also passed appropriate laws such as the momentous 2015 *Marriage, Divorce, and Family Relations Act*. In addition to the Constitution, the Act addresses amongst other issues, the issue of Child marriages. It raises the age of marriage to 18 years. Members will note that the focus of this law is the girl child; her education, her right to her childhood and not to marry early, her right to family planning, as well as the elimination of gender based violence. Apart from this being the right thing to do, such forces of the law are also key to ensuring the socio-economic development of Malawi.

I am pleased to report that the Government is receiving a helping hand from traditional leaders in some rural areas. These leaders as the “custodians of culture” are utilising their traditional powers “enact” their own customary by-laws against early marriages. We invite our cooperating partners both within the UN System and outside to join hands with us in the implementation of this law and in ensuring that the girl child actually receives the benefit of this law.

There are, however, ongoing challenges that Malawi continues to face that limit our achievements in this work of creating a world that values the mutual thriving of all. The most recent 2014/15 floods, the result of the climate change effects are one such issue. The economic setbacks that these led to have made it significantly more challenging for our nation which already has a 50.7% poverty rate to commit more resources to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mr. Chairman,

As a landlocked developing country, we feel that the impact and promise of the ninth Sustainable Development Goal cannot be emphasized enough. Not only would infrastructural development increase the number of Malawians that have access to electricity, this would also lead to many other ripple effects that would facilitate further development. The implementation of this SDG would play an important role in mitigating the effects of inadequate technology and infrastructure on regional and international trade. Not least because of increased accessibility of the global markets to Malawi’s small and medium-sized innovators and entrepreneurs.

I must note that the inconclusiveness of the trade negotiations surrounding duty free, quota free access to LDC products under the WTO Doha Round only exacerbates the

infrastructural challenges faced by landlocked nations. It is therefore my delegation's wish that in addition to the need for explicit support from our cooperating partners to increase direct investment and transfer of technology for infrastructural development, this matter on trade also be brought to a conclusion.

Mr. Chairman,

An area that continues to suffer and cause critical concern because of its far reaching impact is the education system. Statistics show that less than 1 out of every 20 girls finish secondary school while only 30% of all students that attend four years of primary school attain literacy. Given that the true work of sustainable development lies in educating these upcoming generations, these figures are a cause for concern.

There are several areas in this regard that would benefit from the partnership of our global community. The primary school teacher-student ratio in Malawi is currently 1:76, double the benchmark ratio of 1:40. Not only do we need more financial resource to train more teachers, the same is needed for creating competitive packages that motivate qualified teachers to live and teach in rural areas where the need is greatest.

There are also opportunities to partner creatively with Malawi's vision to provide quality education to its people. With the advent of distance learning for example, the ability to train more teachers and to a depth that might have previously been difficult is now possible. We are asking our global partners to enter into this dialogue with us on current and future programmes for increasing access to education especially for the girl child. We also call upon our partners to have conversations with us on how the huge technological advances in the world could be leveraged to continue addressing this issue.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me take this opportunity to express our gratitude to our development partners including the UN system for their continued efforts in assisting Malawi's developmental endeavours. I would like to assure you that despite the many challenges the country is experiencing, we continue to make concerted efforts towards contextualizing and implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. By the time we adopted the SDGs last year, Malawi had according to the UNDP 2014 Report made significant headway in the majority of the MDGs, especially those concerning HIV/Aids, maternal health, etc. As such we call for continual and more robust international support to complement these efforts. My

delegation stands ready to continue working with the United Nations system and the international community to alleviate poverty and foster economic and social well-being for all its people, through the SDGs.

Finally, **Mr Chairman**, as the Committee engages in the discussion of the QCPR resolution, which will play a key role in setting a stage for the implementation of Agenda 2030 and also the IPOA, It is my delegation's ardent hope that the final resolution will reflect the key priorities of the LDCs as contained in the IPOA, as equally reflected in the recently adopted agendas, where they accorded special attention to the needs of the country's in special situation, such as Malawi.

I thank you for your attention.