



**REPUBLIC OF MALAWI**

**STATEMENT**

**BY**

**HIS EXCELLENCY**

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**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI**

**AT THE LAUNCH OF THE 10-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN  
FOR MALAWI 2063**

**BINGU INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER, LILONGWE  
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**Ladies and gentlemen,**

**Malawi 2063 is a photograph of the new Malawi we are building; the new Malawi we want to become by the time Malawi turns one hundred. However, as a nation, we needed to agree on what needs to be done in the first 10 years of that 42-year project. That is what this 10-Year Implementation Plan is about. It is our way of heeding the wisdom of that Chinese proverb which says that a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.**

**However, as we take our first steps onto this path and embark on this journey, we must do so with full awareness that ours is not just a journey of a thousand miles, but also a journey of a thousand roadblocks, distractions, and pitfalls; all of which must be surmounted and overcome. Before we can overcome such obstacles, we must learn to name them; we must learn to acknowledge them; we**

**must learn to recognize them in ourselves; and we must learn to confront them every time they rear their ugly head and threaten to derail our efforts.**

**Saying publicly how we as Malawians are contributing to the sorry state of affairs our country is in is not only painful, but against our national temperament. That is why at an event like this, all the speeches focus on what kind of country we want Malawi to be and what kind of things we need to do to achieve it. What you will seldom hear at an event like this are speeches that focus on what we need to stop doing as a nation. We are very good at wanting so many good things and formulating so many good plans, while neglecting all the things we do that prevent us from making progress towards those ends. But no nation can nurse itself back to health without curing itself of infectious habits.**

**One infectious habit we must each cure ourselves of is the habit of demanding more from our politicians than we demand of ourselves. This 10-Year Implementation Plan is a 210-page document that demands action from every single household and family in Malawi. It is not just a document of what needs to be done by the President, or the Vice President, or Parliamentarians. It is a plan of action for all of us, and each of us is responsible for it. In fact, after this launch, anytime you hear another Malawian complaining about a politician, you should ask them if they themselves have started reading the implementation plan and if they themselves have started implementing it at household level.**

**For example, when this Implementation Plan says that one of the two key milestones we must reach by 2030 is a per capita income of \$1000, what changes does this demand for your household?**

**What will you need to do differently as a family and as a community to increase your income generating capacity? What will you need to do differently for others in your family and community to increase their income generating capacity?**

**Another example from this Implementation Plan that demands citizen action is Pillar 1: Agricultural Productivity and Commercialization. There are seven focus areas under this pillar, three of which are aimed at agricultural diversification, commercialization, and mechanization. The bottom line is that these cannot be done without fundamental changes in farming at household level. That means that if all that your family grows is maize and tobacco for subsistence, then your family has 10 years to learn to grow other crops that are more commercially profitable than maize and tobacco; 10 years to partner with others**

**through cooperatives and adopt new machinery to replace *makasu* and scale up production.**

**These are actions that must be taken by citizens, and I am not just talking about farming households in the villages. Even here in our cities, there are many households that own farms, some large ones, and yet it has never crossed their minds to diversify and commercialize. But if your household fails to diversify and commercialize its farming as this Implementation Plan demands, then it won't matter which politicians you elect into office or how many times you tell a politician to change. If you do not change what you farm and how you farm, we will not become an inclusively wealthy and self-reliant nation. It's that simple.**

**In fact, there are some in our midst who still need to be convinced to start farming because they think they are too educated or too cool to farm. I**

**notice that the Implementation Plan says that we need to digitize farming in order to make it more attractive to young people. I believe that this is not the right way to say it. The right way to say it is that we need to digitize farming in order to make farming more efficient and more productive, and at the same time, we need to reeducate our youth to understand that farming is one of the surest paths to the wealth and prosperity they desire. In other words, the way to make farming attractive to young people is to celebrate those who are prospering from it.**

**We have too many young people in our nation who salivate over the development of Europe, of North America, of Asia, and of African nations like South African. But we need to understand how much of the wealth of those economies was built from smart farming. We need more young people in our colleges and universities to be aspiring either to**

**use their education to make our farming smarter or to use farming as a foundation for building wealth they can invest in building other industries they are trained in. There is no reason a person trained as a doctor cannot build wealth from smart farming and use that wealth to build a hospital. There is no reason a person trained as a teacher cannot build wealth from smart farming and use that wealth to build a school.**

**We need to discourage our youth from wasting their education, and one of the most common ways an education is wasted is limiting a person's career to the field of their education. A true and meaningful education does not just make you an expert in a particular field, but also equips you with the requisite discipline, mindset, and determination to succeed in any fields. In fact, the more education we have received, the more we must demand of ourselves in every arena.**



**One of the tragedies in our nation is our tendency to portray education as a ticket to becoming a boss who sits in an office all day having so much done for you while you yourself do so little. This is a sickness in the fabric of our workforce, and we must cure it. We must cure it by insisting that the most educated in our nation must do the toughest things, work the hardest, and produce the most.**

**Expecting so much of politicians and demanding so little of ourselves, especially those of us with an education, has not helped us for the past ten years and it is not going to help us in the next ten years. After all, when politicians fail, our governance system and our laws provide citizens with mechanisms for either getting them to do better or getting them replaced. When political players fail the country, citizens can protest. When political parties fail the country, citizens can vote them out. When political systems fail the**

**country, citizens can move the Judiciary to intervene or move the Legislature to change the laws. But what hope is there when it is the citizens themselves who fail the country?**

**I therefore submit to you that we need to pay more attention to our civic failures as citizens and take decisive action to correct them. If there is a failure this country cannot afford, it is not the failure of politicians or the failure of foreign donors. Rather, it is the failure of citizens to do what this Implementation Plan demands. That is why I consider the most important pages of this Implementation Plan to be the eight blank sheets that are at the end, where you can write down your own notes of what you, your household, your organization, and your community will do to make this plan real where you are. That is where the rubber meets the road.**

**If we each focus on doing our part, there will be no time left to waste on silly arguments about politician on Whatsapp or on gossip in our offices. We must each get so busy implementing this plan that anyone wanting to consume our time discussing politicians is considered a time-waster. We cannot afford that. Building a new Malawi is heavy work that demands action from all of us, and there is simply no time to waste.**

**I thank you for your attention.**