

**STATEMENT TO BE PRESENTED BY HONOURABLE
DR. GEORGE T. CHAPONDA, M.P., MINISTER OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL
COOPERATION DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF
THE MALAWI-SCOTLAND JOINT PERMANENT
COMMISSION OF COOPERATION MEETING,
EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND, 2nd DECEMBER, 2014.**

- **Honourable Humza Yousaf MSP, Minister for External Affairs and International Development;**
- **Mr. Bernard Sande, High Commissioner of the Republic of Malawi to the United Kingdom;**
- **Ms Karen Watt, Director for External Affairs of the Scottish Government;**
- **Officials from Malawi and Scotland;**
- **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.**

It gives me great pleasure to be in Scotland as we take stock of the progress we have made since the last meeting of the Malawi-Scotland Joint Permanent Commission of Cooperation (JPCC) which was last held in Zomba, Malawi

on 1-2 November, 2012, and also to engage in discourse on how best our cooperation could move forward in this competitive global environment.

Honourable Minister,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

You will agree with me that since the last meeting of the JPCC, there have been political and economic dynamics that have taken place not only in Malawi but also in Scotland and the world over. We need to take stock of these developments as we review progress and discuss programmes to be considered under the next round of funding.

Allow me to brief this meeting on the socio-political developments that have taken place in our country Malawi. This year at a political level, the people of Malawi demonstrated to the entire world that the choice they made in 1994, to exercise their political liberties through a multiparty system of government was not in vain. Each time we hold elections in Malawi, the democratic norms and values of the Malawian people continue to grow as exemplified by the successful holding of the first Tripartite General Elections in May this year. The people of Malawi

democratically elected Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika as their 5th President.

Since our election into office in May this year, we first and foremost understood that the people of Malawi deserve a government which they can trust in the provision of services and more generally in cultivating an environment that promotes human development as a catalyst for the realisation of our national development goals. In that regard, we took stock of the challenges that we face as a country and began to focus on the opportunities which could propel our country forward. Our objective is to be competitive internationally while creating regional balance and maximising on the benefits that we get from our partners in the promotion of our National Interest. Fifty years have passed since we gained our independence in 1964. However, as a country we are not satisfied with the progress which we have made.

Our goal is to ensure that we promote Trade and Investment as a key Foreign Policy objective, engage with our historical and International Cooperating Partners in a manner that creates balance, fairness and enhanced mutual cooperation and benefit. In this regard, we established the Public Service Reform Commission in

order to restructure the public service for the efficient and effective delivery of services.

As part of this initiative, we are instituting Public Finance Management (PFM) reforms to ensure that our resources as well as those of international partners are used prudently and for the intended purpose. As part of these reforms, we are prosecuting all cases involved in the Cashgate scandal. Contrary to the notion from some circles that we are persecuting people politically, the truth of the matter is that institutions such as the Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) and the Malawi Judiciary are independent and professional. In fact, in our national budget this year, a large percentage of our resources have gone to the strengthening of the governance sector. This shows that for Malawi, it will not be business as usual. As a country we are geared towards positive change.

We have also put in place measures aimed at controlling unnecessary public expenditure. All these efforts are aimed at ensuring that we create trust and confidence in Malawi.

On investments, we have established the One Stop Service Centre (OSSC) under the Malawi Investment and Trade

Centre (MITC). Through this framework, we aim at making Malawi a competitive destination for investments. Currently, it will only take 5 working days to process an investment application for both local and international interests. After one year, we hope that this period can be reduced further. Therefore, we encourage investors from Scotland to come and invest in Malawi. I should also mention that a lot of countries are showing keen interest in our mineral and natural resources and infrastructure projects. On my way here, I had a stopover in South Africa where together with the Ministers of Industry and Trade, Transport and Public Infrastructure, we held meetings with Chief Executive Officers of Spanish Corporations. We welcome a similar arrangement whereby under our cooperation framework we can hold an Investment Forum in Malawi. I am pleased that earlier today we held a Governance and Investment meeting. This is indeed a welcome development.

**Honourable Minister,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Allow me to focus on this important meeting. This JPCC affords both Malawi and Scotland an opportunity to take stock of the historical and mutually beneficial relations in

an analytical and sober manner so that this initiative is taken to greater heights. To Malawi, Scotland will always be an important partner for development. The process that Dr. David Livingstone started in Malawi in the 1800s to develop cooperation between our two countries must continue. Scotland needs to be visible more and more in Malawi not only in development cooperation but also in trade and investment.

Therefore, as we reflect on the challenges and successes of our cooperation since the last time we met in Zomba, Malawi in 2012, and focus on future opportunities, more particularly on the next round of funding covering the period 2015-2018, I wish to bring to the attention of this Commission, a rather radical but innovative proposal that would ensure enhanced visibility of our programme to the mutual benefit of our two nations.

**Honourable Minister,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On the JPCC, let me commend the Commission for facilitating progress in the engagement between Government and Project Implementers. In addition, we

note that there has been enhanced collaboration through national and regional symposia and also some progress in the review of project proposals.

However, there are some challenges in the implementation of programmes particularly in project monitoring and evaluation. The last JPCC recommended that the Strand Leaders should be involved in the formulation and monitoring and evaluation of the projects. So far Project implementers argue that they do not have budget allocations for monitoring and evaluation. The lack of monitoring and evaluation exercises threatens successful implementation of the projects. We, therefore, must ensure that all project proposals incorporate Monitoring and Evaluation and that funds are allocated for the exercise. On our part, we will ensure that resources are also earmarked for this important aspect

**Honourable Minister,
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We must also explore the possibility of channelling resources through the Government of Malawi just as it is done in other cooperation agreements. Under such an arrangement, the Scottish Executive could consider

appointing an official to operate under the High Commission in Lilongwe.

It is also important that no project proposal should be submitted for funding without Strand Leaders carrying out a comprehensive review. This is particularly important in ensuring that all project proposals are in line with the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) II.

Let me emphasise that as the world moves forward, we must also follow suit particularly in conceiving projects and programmes that will have a lasting impact both in Malawi and Scotland. Institutional building is important but trade and investment are now critical for development.

Honourable Minister,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, I would like to emphasise that the impact of Official Development Assistance (ODA) is critical to our national development agenda. Our Cooperation with Scotland is of utmost importance and benefit not only to Malawi but to Scotland as well. We want the Malawi-Scotland Cooperation to intensify efforts aimed at elevating our programme so that

we have visibility and impact of projects. In this respect and in accordance with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Accra Agenda of Action and the Busan Declaration, projects and programmes, which are intended to promote Malawi's development, need to be in line with Malawi's national priorities as outlined in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) II.

Secondly, in order to ensure that the development programme should have a discernible economic impact on the intended beneficiaries, the programme should concentrate on one or two projects rather than spreading resources thinly over many projects. For instance, we believe that if we focused on the project on the development on cooperatives and orient them over the export market, the country would not only boost its capacity to generate foreign exchange but it would also lift a lot of rural people out of abject poverty. In this respect, my delegation feels that the Malawi Government should be allowed to propose development projects based on the Malawi Government's development strategy and that the programme should have an in-built activity of project monitoring and evaluation.

Indeed, it is critical that the development programme should have visible and lasting outcomes which should correctly reflect the generosity of the Scottish people and the historical and special relationship between Scotland and Malawi. It is only then that posterity will judge us kindly.

With these remarks, I thank you very much for your attention.