



REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

**PRESS BRIEFING ON OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE
UNITED KINGDOM BY HIS EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR
ARTHUR PETER MUTHARIKA, PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF MALAWI**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
Lilongwe

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25TH COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING (CHOGM)

INTRODUCTION

His Excellency Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi, will undertake an official visit to the United Kingdom where he will attend this year's Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) to be held in London from 16th to 20th April, 2018 and its associated meetings and events. The President will also visit Scotland where he will fulfil a number of engagements aimed at cementing the bilateral relations existing between Malawi and Scotland.

This year's CHOGM, which will be chaired by Right Honourable Theresa May, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, will be held under the theme: *"Towards a Common Future" with the following sub-themes 'a more prosperous future', 'a more sustainable future and 'a more secure future'.*

It is expected that 53 Heads of State and Government will attend the Summit.

The Commonwealth was founded in 1949 and is mostly composed of former British colonies, brought together on a principle of sovereign equality and shared values driven by a common desire to uplift the standards of living of 2.3 billion Commonwealth citizens (of which 60% are under the age of 30). It

is also important to note that 31 of the 53 member nations are small states.

The Commonwealth is currently focusing on Women Rights, Climate Change, Small and Climate Vulnerable States, tackling corruption and organised crime, cyber security, promotion of trade and investment, and reforming the organisation to make it more efficient and effective to the interests of its members.

2.0 BENEFITS OF COMMONWEALTH MEMBERSHIP

Malawi is benefiting from the Commonwealth membership through technical cooperation programmes, capacity building, research, experts exchange programmes, aid provided by member states under the Commonwealth framework, among other channels.

These cover programmes in areas of: Democracy and Consensus Building; Good Offices for Peace; Economic Development; Environmentally-Sustainable Development; Education; Health; Human Development; Human Rights; Rule of Law; Public Sector Development; Gender; Youth; and Sport.

Right now, Malawi is participating in Commonwealth Games in Gold Coats, Australia and is also enjoying sports development programmes through the Commonwealth family.

In democracy consolidation, the Commonwealth provides support during elections through observer missions and technical support. The Commonwealth Observer Group observed the

Malawi Tripartite elections in 2014 and is expected to do likewise in the 2019 polls.

Training in health, education, diplomacy, and other disciplines have been provided under the technical cooperation programmes directly from the Commonwealth Secretariat and through member states.

Malawi has benefitted from the Commonwealth Technical Assistance through secondment of experts to the country in various fields including trade, health, education, research and feasibility studies. *Through technical assistance, the Commonwealth Secretariat will assist the Malawi Trade Department in developing a new National Export Strategy.*

Malawi is one of the beneficiary countries of the programme under 'Commonwealth in Action: Hub and Spokes II- Developing Malawi's competitive export economy, a programme which will run until February 2019.

Youth Awards: Commonwealth encourages innovation through Youth Awards for Excellence in Development Work. In 2017, Malawi was among the 5 finalists for the award through Mr. Charles Lipenga who founded the Maestros Leadership Team, a youth-led organization that trained more than 10,000 young people.

It is also worth noting that since September, 2015, the Commonwealth Secretariat has been subsidizing rent for the Chancery for the Embassy and Permanent Mission of Malawi in Geneva, Switzerland under a programme that is aimed at supporting small states participation in multilateral affairs and integration of their economies into the global economy.

It should also be noted that under support provided by the Commonwealth, the Government of the Republic of India is providing: Training in various disciplines, supporting project related activities such as feasibility studies and consultancy service; donated equipment to Malawi at SMEDI in Mponela, and disaster relief food assistance (rice) for flood victims.

Malawi also benefits through membership to Commonwealth Associated Organizations such as the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organization (CTO) which facilitates common approach and enhanced cyber security and capacity building;

Under **The Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS)**, Malawi dedicated Chimaliro Forest Reserve in Kasungu/Mzimba Districts as the Queen's Commonwealth Canopy, a concept aimed at promoting conservation of forests. The project was launched in Malawi on 13th March, 2018 by His Royal Highness Prince Richard.

PRE-SESSION MEETINGS

In keeping with tradition, this year's summit will be preceded by a series of meetings, including the Commonwealth Business Forum, the Commonwealth Women's Forum and the Malaria Summit, where His Excellency the President has been invited to deliver keynote addresses.

The Business Forum will be held from 16th to 18th April, 2018, where the members of the private sector, including representatives from Malawi's industry and mining sectors, have been invited to attend. His Excellency the President is expected to deliver a statement on investment opportunities in Malawi, and also encourage the Commonwealth business community to consider entering into joint ventures with the private sector in the country.

His Excellency the President has been invited to address the 2018 Women's Forum which will reflect on some of the global challenges still faced by women, as part of a wider commitment to "leave no one behind" in the Commonwealth roadmap to achieving gender equality by 2030 as internationally agreed. His Excellency will take the opportunity to share with the Forum steps his administration is taking to end ills such as violence against women, child marriages, trafficking of women and attacks on people with albinism. The country's early childhood development efforts, child protection, functional literacy and family welfare programmes will be shared with participants at this year's event.

As you are aware, one of the key policies of the government is empowerment of youth through skills development and promotion of young people to positions of influence in order to allow them realise their full potential and contribute to the development of the country. His Excellency the President will share experiences on the strides the country is undertaking to address youth issues when he addresses the Commonwealth.

3.0 VISIT TO SCOTLAND

His Excellency the President will visit Scotland from 22nd to 25th April, 2017. During the visit, the President is expected to hold bilateral talks with the Right Honourable Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister of Scotland, address the Scottish Parliament, and sign the Global Goals Malawi-Scotland Partnership Agreement, among other engagements.

Malawi and Scotland share a rich history which dates back to over 159 years ago when Dr. David Livingstone set his foot on the soil of this country. Like growth of a mustard seed, the bonds of cooperation between Malawi and Scotland have flourished into a unique people to people partnership under the government-civil society framework. In 2005, Malawi and Scotland formalised the partnership through the signing of the first cooperation agreement and establishment of a Joint Permanent Commission of Cooperation (JPCC). The agreement has run its course and the two countries are in the process of negotiating a new agreement which will be signed during the President's visit.

The new agreement seeks to align Scottish support with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Strategy, the African Union's Agenda 2063 and our own economic blueprint, the Third Malawi Growth and Development Agenda (MGDS III), with agriculture and climate change, health, education, and civic governance as areas of focus under the new partnership.

Among the projects being implemented with Scottish support in the country are:

Health: Cervical Cancer screening at Nkhoma Mission Hospital, Maternal health projects, training of medical personnel including nurses, doctors, scholarships for KCN students and medical students in other institutions.

Education: Scotland has ensured that the quality of education is enhanced in Malawi through: ICT skills training for teachers and learners, Schools partnership programmes which links schools in Malawi with other schools in Scotland and links teachers to teacher and learners to learners, Girls education through scholarships, and School feeding programmes.

Sustainable economic development assistance has covered support to Malawian CSOs to implementation of projects in Tourism, Conservation/SMART Agriculture projects, Farm input support programmes, Food security programmes, and Water management projects.

Energy: Scotland assisted Malawi through Renewable Energy strategy, CSOs energy projects, and Community solar energy projects.

Civic governance: Scottish support has been provided through Malawi-Scottish Police cooperation, Support to Malawi Parliament and Malawi Prisons. It is expected that during the visit the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation will sign with his Scottish counterpart an MoU on Malawi/Scotland Police cooperation.

DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT

As part of the on-going programme, the Malawi delegation will seize the opportunity to sensitize Malawians living in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland about the necessity of taking part in the development of their country through a variety of initiatives contained in the country's Diaspora engagement policy. Malawians living abroad will be particularly encouraged to invest in different sectors of the economy in Malawi.