



**Republic of Malawi National Review on the
Beijing + 25:**

**Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and
Platform for Action (1995)**



Ministry of Gender, Children, Disabilities and Social Welfare
Private Bag 330
Lilongwe 3
Republic of Malawi

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ACRONYMS

AGYW	Adolescent Girls and Young Women
AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
APAM	Association of Persons with Albinism in Malawi
AU	African Union
BDPfA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
CARLA	Climate Change, Climate Adaptation for Rural Livelihoods and Agriculture
CBCCs	Community Based Child Centres
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
COMSIP	Community Savings and Investment Programme
COWLHA	Coalition of Women Living with HIV and AIDS
CPR	Contraceptive Prevalence Rate
CVSUs	Community Victim Support Units
EU	European Union
EVAWG	Ending Violence Against Women and Girls
FAWEMA	Forum for African Women Educationalists in Malawi
FEMCOM	Federation of Women
FISP	Farm Input Subsidy Programme
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GFP	Gender Focal Points
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Programme
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IEC	Information Education and Communication
IHS	Integrated Household Survey
ILO	International Labour Organization
JRS	Jesuit Refugee Services
MACRA	Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority
MAF	MDG Acceleration Framework
MARDEF	Malawi Rural Development Fund
MEDF	Malawi Enterprise Development Fund
MDHS	Malawi Demographic Health Survey
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEDF	Malawi Enterprise Development Fund
MGDI	Malawi Gender and Development Index
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MGTT	Malawi Gender Trainers' Team
MIE	Malawi Institute of Education
MIJ	Malawi Institute of Journalism
MISA	Media Institute of Southern Africa
MLF	Microloan Foundation
MLFS	Malawi Labour Force Survey

MoGCDSW	Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare
MoLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
MUSCCO	Malawi Union of Credit and Cooperatives
NABW	National Association of Business Women
NASFAM	National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi
NCIC	National Construction Industry Council
NGM	National Gender Machinery
NGO-GCN	Non-Governmental Organizations Gender Coordination Network
NPFA	National Platform for Action
NSO	National Statistical Office
OVOP	One Village One Product
PAC	Public Affairs Committee
PAP	Poverty Alleviation Programme
PBB	Programme Based Budget
PFM	Public Finance Management
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission
SACCOs	Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SCTP	Social Cash Transfer Programme
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights
STEM	Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics
STIs	Sexually transmitted infections
SWG	Sector Working Group
TEVET	Technical, Entrepreneurial, Vocational Education and Training Authority
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
TTCs	Teacher Training Colleges
UNAMID	United Nations - African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
USADF	United States African Development Foundation
VAC	Violence Against Children
VAW	Violence against Women
VSL	Village Savings and Loan
VSUs	Victim Support Units
WEDGE	Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality
YEDF	Youth Enterprise Development Fund
YFHS	Youth Friendly Health Services

INTRODUCTION

The year 2020 is critical for accelerating the achievements of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The global community will mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), and the five years of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and 10 years of the African Union Agenda 2063-*the Africa We Want*.

Member States have been called upon to consolidate their achievements, challenges and lessons learnt on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 25 years after the adoption of the Declaration (Beijing +25 Reviews).

Government of Malawi has collaborated with relevant public, private, Civil Society organisations, donors and development partners, at all levels in preparing the Beijing+25 Review Report.

The report covers, achievements challenges and lessons learnt, on the implementation of the Declaration and Platform for Action.

SECTION ONE: PRIORITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS

1. What have been the most important achievements, challenges and set-backs in progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women over the past 5 years?

In answering this question, please explain why your country considers these important, how it has addressed them, the challenges encountered and the factors that have enabled progress or led to set-backs in each case (3-5 pages).

Achievements:

2030 Agenda and National Development: Malawi achieved significant advances in four of the eight Millennium Development Goals. These successes, together with the global priorities included in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, form the backdrop to the Government's Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) III (2017-2022). For successful implementation of MGDS III, the government identifies gender balance; youth development; empowerment of persons with disability; among cross cutting areas mainstreamed into the priority areas to ensure that no one is left behind.

Policy Environment and Legal Framework for GEWE: Malawi has made some progress, particularly towards strengthening the legal and policy framework relating to gender. Malawi has a strong policy and legal framework on Violence Against Women and Girls and Harmful

Practices,¹ has ratified most of the core UN human rights treaties,² and has made improvements in the architecture for gender equality and violence prevention, mitigation, and response. In less than a decade, several significant pieces of legislation have been enacted.³ Recently, the government revised the constitution, aligning previously conflicting definitions of a child between the constitution and the Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act, with the intention to end child marriages, and the By-Law framework for Traditional Leaders. A National Strategy on Ending Child Marriages (2018–2023) and the National Action Plan to Combat GBV (2016-2021), have been developed to guide national efforts to this end.

Women’s Economic Empowerment:

Agriculture and Access to Finance: Agriculture remains key for Malawi in terms of driving economic growth and contributing to socio-economic development of the country. The sector accounts for around 28 percent of the country’s GDP and contributes over 80% of the country’s national export earnings. The largest percentage of the country’s workforce of around 64.1% is absorbed by the sector. It is also estimated that rural women farmers make up a large proportion of these subsistence farmers, as they contribute between 60 and 80 percent of the agricultural labour force. Key achievements for GEWE in the Agriculture sector include the development the National Agricultural Policy, the National Agriculture Investment Programme and the Agricultural Sector Gender and HIV strategy that benefit rural women farmers. In addition, programmes and projects are being implemented, targeting rural vulnerable women and female headed households on Climate Smart Agriculture.

Poverty reduction and Access to social services The Government of Malawi is implementing the 40:60 gender quota enshrined in the Gender Equality Act of 2013 to increase the numbers of women and girls accessing education and training, employment that is free from sexual abuse, and access to sexual and reproductive health services. In 2018, the Government of Malawi developed the Malawi National Social Support Programme II in line with the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy III (MGDSIII) to guide programming and delivery of social protection services. The initiatives have enhanced retention of girls in schools, contributed to reduced early marriages and unwanted pregnancies, maternal and child mortality rates. Social Protection among its key development strategies in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy III (MGDSIII) to attain Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, and 10 and Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

1 Key examples of legal and policy frameworks in Malawi include the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act (2006, reviewed in 2015); the Child Care, Protection and Justice Act (2010); the Deceased Estates (Wills, Inheritance and Protection) Act (2011); the Gender Equality Act (2013); the Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act (2015); the Trafficking in Persons Act (2015); the Gender-based Violence National Response Plan (2016); the National Policy on Peace (2016); and the National Gender Policy.

2 Malawi has ratified the following Human Rights Treaties: Convention on Rights of the Child; Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR); Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD); Convention Against Torture (CAT); Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD); International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights; African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child; Southern African Development Community Protocol on Gender and Development; Beijing Platform for Action; UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993).

3 The Prevention of Domestic Violence Act, the Child Care, Protection and Justice Act (2010), the National Registration Act (2009), the Wills and Inheritance Act (2011), the Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act (2015), the Trafficking in Persons Act (2015), the Gender Equality Act, and the Access to Information Act.

Ending Violence Against Women and Girls: The Government at the highest level have demonstrated a high political will towards ending violence against women in Malawi, as one of the 10 HeForShe Global Impact Champions. The Government has also demonstrated commitment towards this cause through enactment of various pieces of legislation that outlaw violence against women and girls. In the context of service delivery, the Malawi has established Victim Support Units in Police Stations and communities to protect women and girls at risk of violence through provision of safe havens to survivors of violence since 2001. Malawi has further established One Stop Centres in all major hospitals and district hospitals. In the context of partnerships and collaboration with other service providers, the Government of Malawi has enhanced coordination with Development partners, Civil Society Organisations and other partners to end Violence Against Women and Girls. The partnerships have enhanced advocacy and awareness on VAWG through campaigns such as Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG), Ndiulula (I Won't be silent) and Leken which are jointly run by Government and CSOs. In Resource mobilization, Malawi is among the 8 African Countries which are implementing the Global joint EU-UN Spotlight Initiative on ending Violence Against Women and Girls. Through this programme, Malawi has already implemented the Quick Wins in selected districts where public structures have been established to effectively respond to VAWG.

Leadership and Political Participation of Women: Women's Political Participation: Over the past 40 years, Malawi has been one of the most stable and peaceful countries in Africa. It has an enviable record of holding five predominantly peaceful elections, including the smooth transition of power between opposing parties. The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II and White Paper 2011 have generated evidence for reducing gender inequalities, including advocacy for affirmative action to increase women representation in politics and encouraging gender parity in decision-making, thus emphasizing demand to accelerate efforts towards achieving gender equality. There has been an increase in female candidature from 2014: 309 female parliamentary candidates in 2019 as compared to 219 in 2014; and 660 female candidates in 2019 for local government as compared to 417 in 2014. There are also more independent female candidates i.e. about 24% for local government election and almost 40% for Parliamentary election.

From 2014-2019, there has been increased women representation in the legislature from 32 women in 2014 elections to 45 women in 2019 election. This has been made possible through the implementation of the 50:50 Campaign. The government implemented the Campaign through the 50:50: Management Agency.

Institutional Coordination of Gender Responses: The Ministry of Gender, Child, Social Welfare and Disability is the Secretariat of the National Gender Machinery to deliver on the Gender Equality Agenda and coordinate multi-stakeholder responses towards Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. The Ministry, though established in the last five years have strengthened institutional capacity coordinating stakeholder effort towards the National Agenda of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

Challenges and Setbacks:

Despite the progress made towards Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, key challenges remain in the following:

Gender discrimination is the most pervasive form of bias and the costliest in terms of impact on sustainable development and the achievement of human rights in Malawi. Gender inequality is high, with Malawi scoring 0.614 on the Gender Inequality Index. The GII is mainly attributed to negative social norms and discriminatory practices, resulting in low levels of representation in politics and the economy with 93 per cent of women in unpaid labour compared to 79 per cent of men. Ending gender discrimination and empowering women and girls are important to Malawi's achievement of national goals and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Policy implementation and enabling environment: While there is a high level of political will for Gender equality and women's empowerment, the commitment to translate political will to action has not been consistent. Limited mechanisms for tracking global commitments and national agenda has resulted in a lack of comprehensive data that could facilitate gender responses at all levels and delays Implementation of global regional and national commitments including the Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, there a low level of Gender responsive planning and budgeting which limits resource allocation and the pace of implementation of the global and regional commitments on GEWE. Additionally, consultations and assessments indicate a need for greater investments in building leadership capacity for gender mainstreaming, coordination, implementation and monitoring at the national and district levels.

Legal Framework for Human Rights and GEWE Malawi continues to face a wide array of other human rights challenges including violence, stigma, and discrimination against women, children and minority groups including persons living with HIV, and persons with albinism. Lack of access to justice, severe prison overcrowding, a narrowing of civil society space and underinvestment in human rights infrastructure and accountability mechanisms continue to limit the most vulnerable from exercising their human rights. While there were attempts to raise awareness on human rights during the MGDS II implementation, such programmes in general remained uncoordinated, largely due to the absence of a National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP). As a result, the MGDS II did not serve as the framework envisioned for Government efforts to promote and protect the full range of human rights in Malawi, nor did it serve as a guide for concrete actions to improve the human rights situation over the many priority areas that were identified.

Women Economic Empowerment

Malawi has experienced a stable economic growth since 2004. For example, between 2004 and 2007 Malawi's economy grew at annual rate of 6.2% but marginally decelerated at an

average growth of 6.1 % between 2008 and 2014.⁴ The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MDGS) III (2017-2022) states that Malawi's GDP growth rate averaged around 6% per year over the last 10 years, and further assumes single digit inflation and an average growth rate of at least 7% in the implementation period of 2017 to 2022. The MGDS III shows that 50.7% of the Malawi population is still living under the poverty line of below \$1 a day. While the poverty rate had declined from 52.4% in 2005 to 50.7% in 2015, the incidence of ultra-poor had increased from 22.4% to 25% over the same period. The National Statistics Office (NSO) Malawi Poverty Estimation Report which covered the period April 2016 to April 2017 stated that moderate poverty levels in the country did not change while ultra-poverty had declined from 24.5% to 20.1%. However, the report stated that overall poverty had slightly increased from 50.7% to 51.8%. The 2019 African Economic Outlook Report⁵ further painted a gloomy picture of Malawi's poverty levels by showing that poverty remains widespread at 51.5% nationwide as at 2017, up from 50.4% in 2010. The 2016 Oxfam report titled: "**A Dangerous Divide: The State of Inequalities in Malawi**" predicts that if inequalities are not addressed 1.5 million more Malawians will be poor by 2020.

The national poverty rate increased slightly from 50.7% in 2010 to 51.5% in 2016, but extreme national poverty decreased from 24.5% in 2010/11 to 20.1% in 2016/17. Poverty is driven by poor performance of the agriculture sector, volatile economic growth, population growth, and limited opportunities in non-farm activities. Where this is read together with Gender Inequality Index for 2017, a GII value of 0.619, ranking the country on position 148 out of 160 countries.

In Malawi, women face higher levels of poverty compared to men because there are gender disparities in education, resources, and access to opportunities. Between 2004 and 2010, there was a general decline of poverty levels by 2% for both male and female headed households. However, for the same period, women in rural areas grew poorer because poverty levels for female headed households increased by 3%, while those for rural male headed households did not change. Generally, female-headed households – who represent 57% of all households, are poorer than male-headed households⁶. It has been argued by economists that Malawi's exclusive focus on growth while ignoring inequality (including gender and economic inequalities) would have little or no impact on poverty reduction by 2020. While growth is necessary it is not sufficient for poverty reduction. Levels of inequality also matter.⁷

Women in Malawi fare worse than men on most social and economic indicators, including wage equality, limited political participation, exposure to violence, low secondary and tertiary education enrolment, literacy and ownership of land and assets. Access to economic resources is a serious challenge for women in Malawi, and marginalized women such as asylum seekers, refugees, internally displaced, and elderly. Laws guaranteeing inheritance and land ownership rights to women are often overridden by social norms and customs or

⁴ Richard Mussa (2017). Poverty and Inequality in Malawi: Trends, Prospects and Policy simulations. Department of Economics, Chancellor College

⁵ The African Economic Outlook report is commissioned by the African Development Bank

⁶ Malawi Growth and Development Strategy III

⁷ Ravallion, 2001, Borgnigoi, 2004 and Fosh, 2009 as cited in Richard Mussa (2017). Poverty and Inequality in Malawi: Trends, Prospects and Policy simulations.

lack of access to appropriate information. Women are estimated to constitute 70 per cent of the labour force in the agricultural sector but have less access to agricultural inputs and credit than men. Wage differentials between men and women are rampant across all economic sectors in Malawi, the most prominent of which can be observed in the agricultural sector. On average, and in terms of median gross wages, female agricultural workers earned 6,600 Malawi Kwacha less per month than their male counterparts. This is especially significant given that most women are smallholder farmers. In 2013, only 6.2 per cent of employed women held a “formal” job and benefited from social security. The share of men with formal jobs was more than double that of women at 15.8 per cent.³²

Ending Violence Against Women and Girls: Violence towards women and girls remains a significant human rights challenge. Harmful cultural practices, practice of early sexual initiation, early and forced marriage, sexual assault, so-called “witch killings,” and domestic violence still occur and require continued efforts to change social mindsets and norms. Marginalized women and girls such as asylum seekers, refugees, internally displaced persons, the elderly and women with disabilities as well as persons with albinism are particularly vulnerable to violence. Factors such as early marriages, harmful cultural practices, religious beliefs, low literacy levels and low economic status of women negatively contribute to the violation of rights of women and must be confronted. Largely seen as a domestic matter, GBV is culturally acceptable and shockingly common. There is a general lack of awareness of laws and policies against GBV among women and law enforcement officials, resulting in a lack of reporting or appropriate legal action.

According to the Gender Based Violence Study, the most common form of physical violence experienced among both females and males in Malawi was beating, hitting, or battering. Experience of this form of violence was twice as high among females as compared to males (24.5% versus 12.4%)⁸. Generally data on all the types of violence shows that two in five women, representing 41%, experience either physical or sexual violence. 16% experience physical violence only; 13% experience sexual violence only and 12% experience both physical and sexual violence. 65% of girls and 35% of boys experience some form of child abuse during their lifetime. About 23% of girls and less than 2% of boys aged 15 to 19 years are married before their 20th birthday⁹.

Women’s Leadership and Political Participation: There are no de jure barriers to effective and equal participation in voter registration and voting in Malawi. However, challenges remain for women’s effective participation in politics, including core areas such as running for office. In 2014, the number of women parliamentarians reduced to 32 from 43 in 2009, and only 56 of the 457 District councillors elected during the last general election were female. The 2014 Tripartite Election statistics painted a gloomy picture for the future of women in politics, as only 257 of the 1,292 candidates vying for 193 Parliamentary seats were women and 44 constituencies had no female contestants. Effective participation in decision-making at central, district and grassroots levels, and progress towards women’s participation in political life remains uneven and slow in Malawi. Failure to observe the

⁸ NSO, UNFPA and UN Women, 2013, Gender Based Violence Survey: A baseline report of 17 districts in Malawi

⁹ Women’s Manifesto, Working paper (2019) “United Women’s Voice: ACT NOW!”

SADC protocol mandate that State parties should ensure 50% women's representation in leadership and decision-making, women's participation in politics and other processes is still a major concern. Despite being led by a female President between 2012 and 2014, there has been little progress towards the equal political participation of women (Afro Barometer, 2015). The Malawi Beijing plus 20 Review Report (2014) states that Malawi only enjoyed high representation of women in political positions temporarily between 2009 and 2014 when representation in Parliament reached a peak of 22.3%. Critical factors contributing to slow progress include lack of affirmative measures (TSMs), poor attitudes towards women as leaders; and low representation of women in political party structures. Further, there are no quotas for women members in appointive, appointed and elective positions for local assemblies. The integration or mainstreaming of gender issues in local planning is not a standard requirement.

Peace, security and humanitarian action: Malawi is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and related shocks that have resulted in losses to life, livelihoods and services availability. Recent disaster related shocks experienced in Malawi include floods leading to massive displacements, restricted access to services and death (2014-2015); drought resulting in food insecurity (2015-2016) and as well, an increase in the number of Asylum seekers/ Refugees. Climate induced humanitarian disasters have led to persistent challenges of food insecurity with approximately 6.7 million people in need of food aid as a result of El Niño conditions in the 2016/17 season. The increasing intensity and frequency of extreme weather events as a result of climate change negatively impacts on the economy through reduced agricultural production and disruption of other climate sensitive sectors. Climate change, in the form of more extreme weather, less predictable seasons or severe heat and drought, poses severe implications on women and their households, since they rely on agriculture for their survival. Unless the specific challenges that women and other vulnerable groups meet in increasing agricultural productivity are resolved, and their resilience to climatic shocks is built, rural women farmers will continue to be trapped in the vicious circle of poverty and food insecurity.

2. Which of the following have been the top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country over the past five years through laws, policies and or programmes? (Please check relevant categories)

Eliminating violence against women and girls

Malawi has made some progress, particularly towards strengthening the legal and policy framework relating to gender. Malawi has made improvements in the architecture for gender equality and violence prevention, mitigation and response. In the past five years, several significant pieces of legislation have been enacted. Recently, the government revised the constitution, aligning previously conflicting definitions of a child between the constitution and the Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act, with the intention to end child marriages. a national strategy on ending Child Marriages 2018-2023 has been developed to guide national efforts to this end. In addition, the traditional leaders through the Chiefs'

Caucus have developed By-laws that seek to end child marriages. The Government has also introduced a policy on re-admission of girls withdrawn from child, 2017 National Strategy to end Child Marriages and the re-admission of girls withdrawn from marriages. Furthermore, that the 2016 National Action Plan for combating GBV has increased reporting of GBV cases.

Malawi has made significant progress in educating girls as a foundation for women empowerment. At the moment, the ratio of girls to boys enrolled in primary schools is 0.85 to 1. Furthermore, as a result of these efforts child marriages have decreased from 50% in 2015 to 42% in 2017.

Women's entrepreneurship and women's enterprises

Malawi has made significant progress towards supporting women entrepreneurship in the last five years. Among them is the 2016 enactment of 10 land and related laws that are promoting women's access to, control and ownership of land and their participation in land administration at both national and sub-national levels. These became effective in 2018 and are in the pilot implementation phase in 7 of the 28 districts. Malawi is also implementing policies and strategies that will change the livelihood of women farmers in the agricultural sector. The policies and strategies include the National Agricultural Policy, the National Agriculture Investment Plan; and the Agricultural Sector Gender and HIV strategy. In light of this Malawi government and partners developed special interventions to support women access to productive resources, technologies and extension services. Additionally, the government of Malawi commissioned a study of gender analysis on microfinance institutions in 2018 in order to unearth the challenges that women face to advance economically with a focus on access to credit. The Government of Malawi (Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare and Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development) and partners have been holding interface meetings with the women and key financial institutions and stakeholders to identify the possible ways to mitigate these challenges and make strides in women's access to credit. Furthermore, the Government of Malawi with the support of UN Women and the World Bank commissioned the Cost of Gender Gap in Agricultural productivity study. The findings of the study are contributing to reforms in the public and private financial institutions policy and regulatory frameworks in the promotion of women and youth's access to credit. The results and recommendations of the study are being used to lobby for women's access to finance which will eventually lead to sensitive procedures for Micro Finance Institutions. Malawi government (Ministry of Agriculture) with the support of UN Women has also been in the process of enhancing rural women's financial and management skills in business management to enabled women to invest in Climate Smart Agriculture and enterprise development and skills to enable rural Women and youths' access secure productive resources, including markets and value-added activities

Women Political Participation and Representation

There have been several initiatives carried out by Malawi through laws, policies and programmes in the realm of women political participation and representation from the time the Beijing +20 report was produced to date. For instance, there was a position paper developed for the Special Law Commission on Electoral Law reforms for the advancement of women participation in politics, in line with efforts to lobby for increased representation and making a case for women inclusion in politics. As a result of the lobbying and advocacy, six electoral reform related bills were drafted by the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional affairs, and they were tabled in parliament in 2017; one of which dealt with the enactment of the Political Party's Rules and Regulations. This bill was finally passed and assented into law in 2018, and among other things, it has done away with the culture of handouts during political campaigns, which is one of the impediments to women political participation in Malawi. In addition, there is in place the Malawi Electoral Cycle Support project (2017 – 2019), focusing on Women Political Empowerment. The project contributes directly to the SDG 16 goal of ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision making at all levels. The primary goal of the project is to assist in Malawi's consensual development of procedural certainty among key electoral stakeholders, which includes women.

Also, the Parliamentary Women Caucus (PWC) hosted a lobbying session with the Malawi National Assembly Speaker and key political parties' leadership in 2017, requesting for women inclusion in constitutional committees. This was successful as it resulted in the increase of female members of parliament in some of the key committees as follows: the Defence and Security committee had its 1st ever female chair and the number of women in the following committees increased; 3 from 1 in the Defence and Security Committee, 4 from 2 in the Legal Affairs committee, 3 from 1 in the Public Appointments Committee and again 3 from 1 in the Budget Committee.

Further to the above, the Parliamentary Women Caucus has over the past five years been able to enhance its capacity for gender responsive oversight, representation and legislation through various capacity building training sessions.

Gender Responsive Budgeting

In the area of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB), several initiatives have also been carried out over the past five years. They include providing GRB guidelines for the Preparation of the 2015/2016 National Budget, resulting in the development of a Strategic Road Map with key actors in the GRB process. Through Malawi Local Government Association (MALGA) and the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MoLGRD), a comprehensive programme was developed for building the capacity of 53 women councillors in Gender Responsive Budgeting. This was crucial, following a nine-year absence of local councils in Malawi, which resulted into weak local government institutions. Also, the capacity in GRB of 181 key personnel responsible for budget formulation from six district councils (M'mbelwa, Machinga, Chikwawa, Chiradzulu, Dedza and Salima) was enhanced through a series of GRB capacity building workshops conducted in 2016. Given that district budgets culminate into the national budget. Other notable achievements include improved skills and technical

knowledge of staff of the National Gender Machinery in GRB. Improved capacity of stakeholders in GRB ultimately resulted in gendered review of several budget related documents, such as the budget guidelines, the treasury instructions as well as the Programme Based Budgeting (PBB) Manual. In addition, in 2018, the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare provided leadership in engendering the Public Finance Management (PFM) Act. The inputs were validated and forwarded to the Ministry of Finance for validation by the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs. The next step is to have the inputs incorporated in to a bill for the new PFM Act. Once the new PFM Act is passed in to law, it shall become mandatory for the various government Ministries, Departments and Agencies to be producing Gender Responsive Budgets.

The PWC has also been conducting annual gender budget analysis for the national budget, with lobbying for increased funding as a follow up action, based on the gender gaps illuminated. Among other results, such a lobby contributed to the rise of the budget for the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare by 23.5% (from K742,753,000,000 in the 2014/15 financial year to K917, 200,000,000 in the 2015/16 financial year).

3. Over the past five years, have you taken specific measures to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination? (Please check relevant categories)

Please provide details of up to three concrete examples, including aims and scope of measures taken, target population, budget, impact evaluations, lesson learnt, and links to further information. Where relevant and possible, please provide data to support your responses (2 pages max.).

Persons with Albinism

Malawi is very committed to ensure that everybody lives a decent life, free from any form of discrimination, torture, exploitation and violence based on the law of the land (The Constitution). Malawi has in the past five years witnessed gross human rights violation of persons with albinism. The violence has been serious, highly prevalent and deeply entrenched resulting into widespread discrimination against this population across the country. In an effort to address the problem, the Government of Malawi through the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare (MoGCDSW) developed the National Action Plan (2018-2023) on Persons with Albinism. In March 2019, Malawi Government allocated funds towards the implementation of the National Action Plan.

The Action Plan succeeds the National Response Plan to Albinism Atrocities. It provides a comprehensive, multi-sectoral and sustained blueprint for ending violence against men, women, boys and girls with albinism and ensuring that they equally enjoy their rights and are fully included in the development of the society. The Action Plan identified and outlined 7 priority areas to protect and promote rights of persons with albinism in line with other national, regional and international human rights instruments. The identified areas focus on promoting security and protection of persons with albinism, ensuring responsive and inclusive legal and policy frameworks on albinism issues, and ensuring equal access to social

services such as health and education. Furthermore, the government of Malawi amended the The Anatomy Act on 23rd June 2016. The Act calls for a life sentence for crimes related to possession of human tissues and body parts of people with albinism. Two critical pieces of legislation are the Trafficking in Persons Act 2016 and The Anatomy Act 2016 which have been very instrumental in the protection and prosecution of perpetrators of these heinous crimes. Cases relating to abduction and killings of people with albinism are now being reported to relevant security agencies at community, district and national levels for immediate action. In 2019 alone, a total of 8 cases have been reported. The media at international level, is also covering stories on rights for persons with albinisms much more than before. Furthermore, with technical support from UN Women, Malawi Government has been engaged through different dialogue mechanisms to increase safety and protection for people with albinism, following a sharp increase in killings and abductions of people with albinism. Women and children were mostly victims of these ritual killings. Additionally, there has been increased Awareness Campaigns on Albinism that aimed to raising awareness on the rights of people with albinism and to deconstruct myths around the body parts of people with albinism. Community Protections systems have also been strengthened in some districts especially those with large populations of persons with albinism. There has been a significant increased capacity and institutional strengthening of the Association of Persons with Albinism (APAM) to engage and advocate on their plight.

Women Living in Remote and Rural Areas

Women contribute 70% of all labour in agriculture and contribute 80% of all food production and only 37% of females own land. Malawi has just adopted the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy, which is an overarching policy framework for Malawi. The Strategy attempts to put gender equality at the fore-front of all programming endeavours in Malawi. Further to this, Malawi has developed policies and strategies such the National Agricultural Policy, the National Agriculture Investment Programme and the Agricultural Sector Gender and HIV strategy that also are to benefit rural women farmers

Malawi has been implementing the National Social Support Programme which has sub-programmes such as the Social Cash Transfer Programme; Public Works Programme; School Feeding Programme and COMSIP. The Programme aims at addressing poverty reduction, improving enrolment, retention of children in school and extreme hunger among the 10 percent of the population that is ultra-poor, and labour constrained So far, the program is benefitting 1.2 million individuals in 280,000 households. The Programme has 70% female headed households, 2 % child headed households while in terms of individual beneficiaries 70 percent are women and girls. (www.malawi.gov)

In order to address the needs of rural women, Malawi has been implementing the Social Cash Transfer Programme which targets the labour constrained and ultra-poor households. Currently, the Programme has reached 176, 000 households out of which 73% are female headed households, which started in 2006 and has since been rolled out in all the 28 districts of the country. There are 786,00 individual beneficiaries, 56% of whom are rural women farmers who use the transfers to procure farm inputs and other household necessities. Malawi development of the National Social Support Programme II is in line with the Malawi Growth

and Development Strategy III (MGDSIII) which guides programming and delivery of social protection services. The Programme aims at addressing poverty reduction, improving enrolment, retention of children in school and extreme hunger among the 10 percent of the population that is ultra-poor, and labour constrained. So far, the program is benefitting 1.2 million individuals in 280,000 households. The Programme has 70% female headed households, 2 % child headed households while in terms of individual beneficiaries, 70 percent are women and girls. Malawi is also implementing Village Savings and Loans Initiatives targeting the poor including rural women. Over 3,000 clusters of loans and Village Savings Groups are operational benefitting 4.5 million individuals and over MK5 billion (US \$7 million) is in circulation. Malawi has also rolled out the school meals Programme which is benefitting 44% of all public primary schools, especially the ones located in rural areas including provision of take-home rations to orphaned pupils and girls from ultra-poor families. The social cash transfers, school meals and construction of girls' hostels have enhanced retention of girls in primary and secondary schools by 40%. Malawi has further embarked on construction of girls' hostels in Community Day Secondary Schools and the provision of sanitary facilities for adolescent girls; recruitment of more young women into vocational training; construction of health facilities and schools within the radius of 5kms, rural feeder roads and bridges to increase access to these services and agricultural markets. All these programs are initiatives aimed at enhancing retention of girls in schools, contribute to reduced early marriages and unwanted pregnancies, maternal and child mortality rates.

Women and HIV and AIDS

Unequal gender relations are the major driver of the epidemic in Malawi. Based on the 2016 MDHS data; HIV prevalence in the 15-49 age group is higher among women (13%) than men (9%) reflecting a widening gender gap between men and women. Deeply embedded gender inequalities and harmful gender norms put women, girls, men and boys at risk of HIV infection. Malawi has made tremendous progress towards the implementation of women, the girl child, HIV and AIDS resolution.

In responding to the plight of women and girls in reference to GBV and HIV, Malawi has been addressing structural issues through the formation of progressive legislative and policy frameworks. This has been through the passing of progressive legislation notably the passing of various Acts; the Marriage Divorce and Family Relations; Gender Equality; Child Care, Prevention and Justice; Education and the HIV and AIDS Acts among others and adopted the Gender and HIV policies and produced the HIV plan on Gender, Girls and HIV. Malawi is on course implementing the 90:90:90 target by 2020. Further Traditional leaders have been very instrumental towards addressing harmful cultural practices that women and girls at risk of HIV infection. The development of the "One Bylaw Framework" is such a commitment.

In addition, Malawi with support from UN Women, conducted a perception study on Gender Norms and HIV and AIDS in Malawi. The study aimed at examining the prevailing gender norms associated with the harmful cultural practices. It explored and mapped out the common deeply engendered harmful practices and further defined their linkages with HIV and AIDS prevention and other forms of vices against women and girls. The study recommendations are being used to develop transformative gender and HIV initiatives. Further, the government in

close collaboration with CSOs is mobilizing women and girls, men and boys at community level for community transformation on gender in the context of HIV and AIDS and this influencing attitude and behavior change, as well as, helps promote the sustained impact of male involvement through the construction of favorable gender norms, attitudes and behaviors.

The government continued implementing the HIV Prevention And Management Act 2016 ,Gender Equality Act 2013; national and sector specific HIV and AIDS strategies such as the Malawi National HIV Prevention Strategy (2015 – 2020); 90:90:90 target; Chiefs By-law Framework to address harmful cultural practices that expose women and girls to the risk of HIV infection; and ART provision throughout the country targeting 700 ART clinics. These efforts aim at addressing

HIV prevalence in the 15-49 age group which is higher among women (13%) than men (9%) reflecting a widening gender gap between men and women (MDHS, 2016). The strategies encompass all age groups including un-born babies whose parents are living with HIV and AIDS and have contributed to 90% of the population being aware of their HIV status, 79%. Of those with HIV are on ART and 87% of those on HIV Treatment are virally suppressed (<http://unaids.org>)

Survivors of Child Early and Forced Marriages

Malawi has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world, with approximately 1 in 2 girls married by the age of 18¹⁰. One of the main challenges in ending child marriage in Malawi is traditional and engrained attitudes that make the practice accepted across the society. Poverty is another major contributor behind child marriage, so often in rural areas the very young girls will be married off to improve a family's economic situation. Communities in the northern Malawi practice the so-called *kupimbira* (giving a young daughter in marriage as repayment for a debt)¹¹.

Malawi is a state party to several international treaties and conventions aimed at fighting and prohibiting child marriage. Malawi has also amended her Constitution, raising the age of the child from 16 to 18 years. The Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act, recognizes 18 as a minimum age of marriage for both girls and boys. Besides the Constitution and the Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act, the Government also enacted laws such as the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act (2006); the Child Care, Protection and Justice Act (2010); the Deceased Estates (Wills, Inheritance and Protection) Act (2011); the Gender Equality Act (2013); and the Trafficking in Persons Act (2015). The aim behind all these pieces of legislation is to protect the rights of women and children at all levels.

In 2018, Malawi adopted a National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage (2018-2023). The Strategy intends to provide leadership, guidance and oversight in national efforts of ending child marriages. The Strategy is tackling the key drivers of child marriage by seeking to empower girls through increased economic opportunities and initiating incentive-based programmes to support girls to enrol for school, reduce the dropout rate and keep them in

¹⁰UNICEF, *State of the World's Children*, 2016

¹¹Human Rights Watch, "I've never experienced happiness": Child marriage in Malawi, 2014

school through to secondary level. The Plan also seeks to effectively enforce laws that were developed to protect children from child marriage. The Strategy also aims at harmonizing and popularizing the different pieces of legislation and building the capacity of law enforcement agencies.

Furthermore, the Strategy is strengthening community engagement through dialogues on child marriage, in order to transform attitudes and social norms and raise awareness of the dangers of child marriage. The strategy also focuses on making available, safe, comprehensive, age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health information, and services to all young girls in Malawi including those who are already married at a young age, by providing adequate and accessible healthcare, psychosocial support and, if necessary, a way out of the marriage. To improve disaggregated data collection, monitoring and evaluation and deeper understanding of the problem, the Strategy is also promoting further research on child marriage. All these strategies are being implemented in close collaboration with international organizations, NGOs and other partners.

The work of Custodians of culture, Chiefs, in Malawi has been instrumental in curbing child marriages in Malawi using community by-laws, which are aimed at eliminating child marriages. The total marriages that have been annulled through chiefs complemented by government efforts are 4807 since 2015. A number of the girls have returned back to school to further their education, while others have learned vocation and trade and have set up businesses.

4. Has increasing number of humanitarian crises-caused by conflict, extreme weather or other events – affected the implementation of the BPfA in your country? 1 page

Malawi for the past five years has experienced humanitarian disasters: flooding in 2015, droughts in 2017 and in March 2019, seasonal flooding which has been complicated by the Cyclone Idai. The disasters caused extensive damage to houses and household items, crops, livestock and infrastructure. Further, it also affected the protection sector mainly social processes, protection structures, increased risks and vulnerabilities and availability and access to services. In responding to the situation the government of Malawi through the department of Disaster Preparedness provided leadership for rapid response as well as, recovery and resilience building for the affected populations. The protection cluster led by the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare (MoGCDSW) has been strengthened to ensure provision of coordinated protective services such as, referrals for SGBV at national and district levels for women and girls and other vulnerable populations. Further, the protection cluster has lobbied for increase and availability of dignity kits for women and adolescent girls to manage their special hygiene needs and menstruation, provision of emergency psychosocial support through the creation of women and child friendly safe spaces at the camp level. The Malawi Police Service and selected human rights monitoring organizations have also been supported to provide appropriate protection needs of the displaced population and improve the safety and security of camps through enhancing the visibility of police officers, including female police officers, improve the accountability of the officers and improve referrals and investigations of criminal incidents/protection complaints in the emergency and recovery phase. Further, the government of Malawi is making strides towards strengthening of the national and village protection committees in the

collection of sex, aged and disability disaggregated data in the camps and among stakeholders working on humanitarian work as well as generating a body of knowledge that will assist organizations and institutions with regard to their programming in so far as women and girls in humanitarian crisis are concerned. The Government of Malawi has also supported the gendering of the Post Disaster Needs Assessment, which identified female headed households for priority housing interventions.

To mitigate the effects of the disasters, the government through the Department Of Disaster Management Affairs(DODMA) coordinates implementation of the National Disaster Risk Management Policy (2015); and the provision of leadership for rapid response, recovery, resettlement and resilience building for the affected populations. Malawi has further introduced Disaster Risk Management Course at the Malawi University Of Science And Technology (MUST).

5. Which of the following does your country consider to be the top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country for the coming five years through laws, policies and programmes? (please check relevant categories) Please provide brief reflections on how you plan to address these priorities (3 – 5 pages).

Malawi's Top Five Priorities

- Changing negative social norms and gender stereotypes
- Poverty eradication, agricultural productivity, and food security
- Eliminating Violence against women and girls
- Increasing Political participation and representation
- Gender Responsive Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience Building

Changing negative social norms and gender stereotypes: The overarching priority for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Malawi is changing social norms and gender stereotypes. Gender discrimination including Violence against women and girls is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between males and females in private and public life. The key underlying factor for gender disparities and VAWG in Malawi are deeply entrenched social norms which enable gender inequalities, and a culture of silence which enables VAWG. Social norms frequently perpetuate the idea that family violence is a 'private' matter in which outsiders should not intervene and that sexual violence is shameful for the victim, a man's 'right', or that the woman is to blame. The cultural acceptance of sexuality, particularly male sexuality, in a deeply male dominant and patriarchal culture continues to engender a culture of violence that victimizes women and children, particularly the girl child. Although small changes are notable, such traditional customs and stereotypes are still deeply entrenched in Malawian society. Inequitable gender norms need to be shifted in favor of norms promoting non-violence, equitable relationships, protection, and shared responsibilities, to sustainably prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls. To address this, the government in partnership with development partners is implementing

national and subnational evidence based programmes. Government and the UN are implementing the joint Program on Girls Education and the Spotlight Initiative that promote positive equitable norms, attitudes and behaviors. The strategies are focusing on promoting gender equitable norms, Communication for Development (C4D), interpersonal communication, community engagement targeting traditional and religious leaders, including other gatekeepers, and male engagement.

Malawi will continue to implement the following legal and policy frameworks for rapid reduction and elimination of negative social norms and gender stereotypes: Land Act (2016); Customary Land Act (2016); Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act (2015); Trafficking in Persons Act (2015); Gender Equality Act (2013); Deceased Estate (Wills, Inheritance and Protection) Act (2011), National Children Policy (2019); and Gender Policy (2015) among others .

The government will coordinate implementation of key strategies which include the following to address the negative social norms and gender stereotypes: National Action Plan to Combat GBV (2016-2021), Plan of Action on Ending Violence against Children, National Strategy On Ending Child Marriages (2018-2023) and National Action Plan on People With Albinism (2018-2022), among others.

Poverty eradication, agricultural productivity and food security. The Government of Malawi, prioritized Agriculture and productivity as one of the major development priorities in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy III (2017-2021) with a focus on increased empowerment of the youth, women, persons with disability and vulnerable groups. Women have been prioritized in poverty eradication through agricultural productivity as the form the lowest wealth quartile, and about 70% are engaged in subsistence agriculture. The government has identified the following areas in empowering women and other vulnerable groups in agriculture production and increasing access to finance and financial services: Promoting establishment of cooperatives; Promoting access to, ownership and control of productive resources; Promoting agricultural education and technical training for women, youth, and vulnerable groups; and Promoting access to finance for women, youth and vulnerable groups in agriculture.

The Government of Malawi along with Partners and other stakeholders have identified the the following strategies in addressing the priority areas stated in the National Agenda: Increase women's access to land and land tenure security through policy and land reforms; advocacy, awareness raising and sensitization to institutional and traditional stakeholders; improve access to appropriate climate-resilient information tools and innovative green technologies; increase rural women's access to climate-resilience agriculture financing opportunities; increase their access to markets and value added interventions; and increasing women's access to information and appropriate innovative technologies

Eliminating violence against women and girls: The Government of Malawi has identified Ending Violence Against Women and girls, and other harmful practices such as Early Child Marriage as priority for attaining the SDGs targets of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. These priorities are grounded on the 2030 Agenda and SDG principles of

leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first. Interventions and initiatives will contribute directly to the SDG targets on the elimination of all forms of VAWG (SDG 5.2 and 5.3).

Key strategies include: a) Implementation of laws, policy and legislative framework on all forms of violence against women and girls and harmful practices, through translation of the policies to action plans and implementation frameworks; b) Strengthening national and subnational systems and institutions to plan, fund and deliver evidence based *that prevent and respond to VAWG and HP*, the initiative will provide technical and financial support to local government and non-governmental institutions that directly or indirectly work on prevention of and response to SGBV and VAWG and SHRH; c) prevention and social norms by focusing on strategic interventions which will prevent harmful practices and transform negative social norms that perpetrate VAWG, in a comprehensive manner; d) Quality Integrated Service Delivery to girls and women at risk of violence. Intergrated essential services that include SRH, justice, prosecution, and psychosocial support in line with international human rights standards and guidelines. Special focus will be on strengthening the provision of the essential services package e) Collection, Analysis and Dissemination of Quality, disaggregated and globally comparable data on different forms of violence against women and girls and harmful practices collected, analysed and used in line with international standards to inform laws, policies and programme and f) Strengthening Advocacy and Voice mechanisms through the engagement and coordination of Non- State actors and Civil Society Organizations

Political participation and representation: Priority areas for ensuring political participation of women includes sustained advocacy for implementation of the recommendations for electoral reforms, particularly at the level of the Political parties where the nominations occur. Additionally continual effort to be made to support women that are independent candidates as Malawi has a political party driven culture on candidature nomination, which does not favor women; continuous training to electoral management body and polling staff on the gender dynamics related to elections and electoral processes; and continuous civic education not only on the need to vote but on how to vote for non-presidential candidates (MPs, Local councilors).

- Provision of integrated essential services, towards ending violence against women in elections, the Government of Malawi in partnership with partners will continue to strengthen integrated monitoring and reporting of incidents of violence against women pre- and post-elections and provide linkages to police and legal services.
- Civic Education, Advocacy and mobilization: Pre and post elections sensitization and civic education targeted at communities will be a priority, particularly towards women's roles in the political space and to encourage citizens, particularly women to vote
- Institutional Strengthening of the Electoral Commission to ensure that the elections administration and procedures are gender responsive

Gender Responsive Disaster Risk Prevention, Reduction and Resilience Building:

Malawi will continue implementing the national disaster risk management policy (2015) to sustainably reduce disaster losses in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets of individuals, communities and the nation. The government will coordinate the implementation of the following key strategies: promoting awareness, access, distribution and utilization of reliable and relevant DRM information; implementing disaster risk reduction interventions in disaster prone areas; mainstream DRM into development policies, strategies, plans and programmes; enhance disaster preparedness for effective response; and strengthen stakeholder institutions for effective disaster management.

SECTION TWO: PROGRESS ACROSS THE 12 CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

This section covers progress across the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action. To facilitate the analysis, the 12 critical areas of concern have been clustered into six overarching dimensions that highlight the alignment of the BPfA with the 2030 Agenda. This approach is aimed at facilitating reflections about the implementation of both frameworks in a mutually reinforcing manner to accelerate progress for all women and girls.

INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT, SHARED PROSPERITY AND DECENT WORK

Critical areas of concern:

- A. Women and poverty
- F. Women and the economy
- I. Human rights of women
- L. The girl child

6. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to advance gender equality in relation to women's role in paid work and employment?

- Strengthened / enforced laws and workplace policies and practices that prohibit discrimination in the recruitment, retention and promotion of women in the public and private sectors, and equal pay legislation
- Introduced / strengthened gender-responsive active labour market policies (e.g. education and training, skills, subsidies)
- Taken measures to prevent sexual harassment, including in the workplace
- Improved financial inclusion and access to credit, including for self-employed women
- Improved access to modern technologies (incl. climate-smart technologies), infrastructure and services (incl. agricultural extension)
- Other

Please provide details of up to three concrete examples of measures taken, including aims and scope of measures taken, target population, budget, impact evaluations, lesson learnt,

and links to further information. Please also provide information about actions for specific groups of women and girls, such as those listed in question 3. Where relevant and possible, please provide data to support your responses. (2 pages max.)

Strengthened / enforced laws and workplace policies and practices that prohibit discrimination in the recruitment, retention and promotion of women in the public and private sectors, and equal pay legislation: The Gender Equality Act (2013) outlaws sex discrimination and has elaborate provisions for addressing sexual harassment in the workplace. The Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Programme (2012 – 2015) coordinated by the Ministry of Gender and have a sexual harassment component, though only focusing on public institutions. The Child Care (Protection and Justice) Act of 2010 provides for reporting of any violation of child rights. During commemorations of the Day of the African Child and the Day of the Girl Child, communities are routinely sensitized on the rights of children and responsibilities of parents

Introduced / strengthened gender-responsive active labour market policies (e.g. education and training, skills, subsidies): The legal frameworks include: the Employment Act (2017), Public Procurement Act (2017), Gender Equality Act (2013), among others. The policy frameworks on the other hand include: National Empowerment and Labour Policy (2014 - 2019), Gender Equality Act Implementation Plan (2016-2020). Several legal measures are in place, for example, though inadequate, the provisions in the employment law on maternity leave¹² are an attempt to promote the harmonisation of work with family responsibilities. Workers including domestic workers (most of whom are women) are entitled to overtime allowance if they work long hours; leave days, a weekly day off and severance pay at the end of the contract. To protect part-time, temporary, seasonal and home-based workers, the Pensions Act (2011) introduced mandatory pension and incentives such as severance pay, long service allowance, overtime allowance and leave days for employees. Where there are disputes the aggrieved employee can take the case to the Industrial Court or the Ombudsman for redress. However, some institutions have introduced paternity leave in the work place for their male employees i.e. VSO, UN Agencies and members of Malawi Business Coalition against HIV/AIDS. Besides, paternity leave is one of the issues in the revised Public Service Act. This process being led by the Office of the President and Cabinet (OPC) under the Public Sector Reforms Unit. The Malawi Decent Work Country program M-DWCP- (2011 – 2016) acknowledges gender gaps and inequalities in the employment sector. The M-DWCP therefore seeks to create an environment for increased participation of women and other vulnerable groups and enhance employment of women and the youth among other groups.

Improved financial inclusion and access to credit, including for self-employed women: National Action Plan on Women Economic Empowerment (2016-2022) and National Social Support Programme: These measures have among others benefitted 1.5 million individuals in 319,000 households of which 73% are female headed households, 26% are child headed

¹² In Sections 47 and 48 the Employment Act 2000 specifically provides for 8 weeks full pay maternity leave within every 3 years. During that period the female employee maintains all her benefits and entitlements including contractual rights and seniority and period of work is not entrapped.

households and 56% are female farmers who use the transfers to procure farm inputs and other household necessities (link). They have also created and supported Village Savings and Loan facilities for rural women in all the districts. Over 3000 clusters of loans and Village Savings Groups are operational benefiting 4.5 million individuals and over MK5 billion (US \$7 million) is in circulation (link). Mention has to be made that the National Social Support Programme basically prioritise women living in rural and semi- urban areas, women living with HIV and AIDS, women living with disabilities and children in school.

Improved access to modern technologies (incl. climate-smart technologies), infrastructure and services (incl. agricultural extension) Malawi launched the National Agricultural Policy (2016) and the National Agricultural Investment Plan (2018) both of which have prioritised women empowerment as a key area of focus. This is in addition to the continued implementation of the Agriculture sector Gender and HIV strategy in the NAP, one of the objectives is to increase women's and youth's access to, ownership of, and control of productive agricultural assets by 50 percent. Some of the key interventions that have been implemented to support this objective include provision of improved farm inputs to farmers including women through the Farm Input Subsidy Programme, implementation of climate smart technologies such as conservation agriculture, implementation of several projects in the agricultural sector such as the Agricultural Sector Wide Approach Support Programme, Programme for Rural Irrigation Development, Sustainable Agricultural Productivity Programme and other programmes that have strategies targeting women. In addition, Agricultural extension and Advisory services were also intensified through mounting of demonstration and conducting field days to promote new technologies.

Key Issues:

- Malawi is yet to ratify ILO Convention 156 on Workers with Family Responsibilities and Convention 183 on Maternity Protection. These instruments are to enforcing anti-discrimination measures that can level the economic playing field for women and men through the promotion of State support for maternity leave and child care. Also, the Government has not ratified Convention No. 189 and Recommendation No. 201 concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers (2011).
- Inadequate capacity of women especially for women living in the rural areas to profitably engage in micro-businesses is a major handicap. They rarely graduate into small-scale businesses (they likely only graduate from ultra to moderate poor), usually due to the very small amount of loans and lack of linkages to banks. The establishment of women's bank/major loan facility that is well targeted and chamber of commerce would be worth pursuing.

Key Recommendations:

- i. Need to fully implement the Gender Equality Act (2013)

- ii. Similarly, it is of utmost importance for Malawi to ratify ILO Convention 156 and 183 in order to allow women fully realize their human rights.

UNPAID CARE AND DOMESTIC WORK AND PROMOTE WORK-FAMILY CONCILIATION

7. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to recognize, reduce and/or redistribute unpaid care and domestic work and promote work-family conciliation?

Critical areas of concern:

- A. Women and poverty
- F. Women and the economy
- I. Human rights of women
- L. The girl child

- Included unpaid care and domestic work in national statistics and accounting (e.g. time-use surveys, valuation exercises, satellite accounts)
- Expanded childcare services or made existing services more affordable
- Expanded support for frail elderly persons and others needing intense forms of care
- Introduced or strengthened maternity/paternity/parental leave or other types of family leave
- Invested in time- and labour-saving infrastructure, such as public transport, electricity, water and sanitation, to reduce the burden of unpaid care and domestic work on women
- Promoted decent work for paid care workers, including migrant workers
- Conducted campaigns or awareness raising activities to encourage the participation of men and boys in unpaid care and domestic work
- Introduced legal changes regarding the division of marital assets or pension entitlements after divorce that acknowledge women's unpaid contribution to the family during marriage
- Other

Please provide details of up to three concrete examples of measures taken, including aims and scope of measures taken, target population, budget, impact evaluations, lesson learnt, and links to further information. Please also provide information about actions for specific groups of women and girls, such as those listed in question 3. Where relevant and possible, please provide data to support your responses. (2 pages max.)

According to the Malawi Demographic and Health Survey (2015-2016), more than 70% of married women were employed at any time in the past 12 months of that period compared to 98% of married men. Working women are more likely not to be paid for their work (59%), while working men are more likely to be paid in cash (61%). Only 30% of working women are paid in cash. Nearly half of married women who are employed and earned cash made joint decisions with their husband on how to spend their earnings. Overall, 70% of women reported earning less than their husband.

Progress

Introduced or strengthened maternity/paternity/parental leave or other types of family leave
Several legal measures are in place, for example, though inadequate, the provisions in the employment law on maternity leave¹³ are an attempt to promote the harmonisation of work with family responsibilities. Workers including domestic workers (most of whom are women) are entitled to overtime allowance if they work long hours; leave days, a weekly day off and severance pay at the end of the contract.

Promoted decent work for paid care workers, including migrant workers:

- To protect part-time, temporary, seasonal and home-based workers, the Pensions Act (2011) introduced mandatory pension and incentives such as severance pay, long service allowance, overtime allowance and leave days for employees. Where there are disputes the aggrieved employee can take the case to the Industrial Court or the Ombudsman for redress. However, some institutions have introduced paternity leave in the work place for their male employees i.e. VSO, UN Agencies and members of Malawi Business Coalition against HIV/AIDS. Besides, paternity leave is one of the issues in the revised Public Service Act. This process being led by the Office of the President and Cabinet (OPC) under the Public Sector Reforms Unit.
- The Malawi Decent Work Country program M-DWCP- (2011 – 2016) acknowledges gender gaps and inequalities in the employment sector. The M-DWCP therefore seeks to create an environment for increased participation of women and other vulnerable groups and enhance employment of women and the youth among other groups.
- The Gender Equality Act (2013) outlaws sex discrimination and has elaborate provisions for addressing sexual harassment in the workplace. The Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Programme (2012 – 2015) coordinated by the Ministry of Gender and have a sexual harassment component, though only focusing on public institutions.
- The Child Care (Protection and Justice) Act of 2010 provides for reporting of any violation of child rights. During commemorations of the Day of the African Child and the Day of the Girl Child, communities are routinely sensitized on the rights of children and responsibilities of parents

Key Issues

- Malawi is yet to ratify ILO Convention 156 on Workers with Family Responsibilities and Convention 183 on Maternity Protection. These instruments are to enforcing anti-discrimination measures that can level the economic playing field for women and men through the promotion of State support for maternity leave and child care. Also, the Government has not ratified Convention No. 189 and Recommendation No. 201 concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers (2011). This situation has the

¹³ In Sections 47 and 48 the Employment Act 2000 specifically provides for 8 weeks full pay maternity leave within every 3 years. During that period the female employee maintains all her benefits and entitlements including contractual rights and seniority and period of work is not entrapped.

potential of contributing to exploitation of domestic workers despite their legal entitlements.

Recommendations

- There is need to include unpaid care work in the programming of interventions as it is one of the major obstacles to the achievement of gender equality;
- Need to fully implement the Gender Equality Act (2013)
- More institutions must consider introducing paternity leave in order for men to share the burden of child care responsibilities with their spouses. Similarly, it is of utmost importance for Malawi to ratify ILO Convention 156 and 183 in order to allow women fully realize their human rights.

AUSTERITY/FISCAL CONSOLIDATION MEASURES

8. Has your country introduced austerity/fiscal consolidation measures, such as cuts in public expenditure or public sector downsizing, over the past five years?

YES/NO

If YES, have assessments on their impact on women and men, respectively, been conducted?

Yes, their impact on women/men was estimated before measures were put in place.

Yes, the impact was assessed after measures were put in place.

No, the impact on women/men has not been assessed.

If YES, please describe the findings (1-2 pages).

Yes: Austerity/Fiscal Consolidation Measures Taken, Such as Cuts in Public Expenditure or Public Sector Downsizing: Every year the government implements measures to reduce public expenditures through issuing seculars that focus on public expenditure control, freezing of employment and grounding of government vehicles. The impact of the measures includes: government expenditures are controlled wage bill is contained within minimum ceiling and only critical positions are filled. The latter however, results in high vacancy rates in all MDAs leading to compromised service delivery at all levels. The impact on women particularly those living in rural areas; living with HIV and AIDS and living with disabilities is inadequate service provision.

The Government of Malawi has also instituted reforms in the farm input subsidy programmes, with reduction in agricultural inputs. The reforms disproportionately affect women financially particularly rural women as women make up the over 70% of subsistence farming.

9. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to reduce/eradicate poverty among women and girls?

- Promoted poor women's access to decent work through active labour market policies (e.g. job training, skills, employment subsidies, etc.) and targeted measures

- Broadened access to land, housing, finance, technology and/or agricultural extension services
- Supported women’s entrepreneurship and business development activities
- Introduced or strengthened social protection programmes for women and girls (e.g. cash transfers for women with children, public works/employment guarantee schemes for women of working-age, pensions for older women)
- Strengthened low-cost legal services for women living in poverty.

Please provide details of up to three concrete examples of measures taken, including aims and scope of measures taken, target population, budget, impact evaluations, lesson learnt, and links to further information. Please also provide information about actions for specific groups of women and girls, such as those listed in question 3. Where relevant and possible, please provide data to support your responses. (2 pages max.)

Progress

During the period under review Malawi continues to make progress in critical areas of concern. However, women living in poverty still require practical and strategic actions that will put them at the epicenter of macroeconomic policies and development strategies; concrete measures for improving their access to credit and savings; an enabling legal and administrative environment for increasing their economic resources; and the development of gender based methodologies, research and time-use studies to help in comprehensively addressing feminization of poverty.

Promoted poor women’s access to decent work through active labour market policies (e.g. job training, skills, employment subsidies, etc.) and targeted measures : The legal and policy frameworks generally support non-discrimination and gender equality in employment and economic matters. The Constitution of the Republic of Malawi promotes the right to economic activity.¹⁴ It also assures women, youth and people with disabilities special consideration in the promotion of the right to development, including through access to employment.¹⁵ The Employment Act of 2000 prohibits discrimination in employment based on sex and promotes equal remuneration for equal value of work. The Gender Equality Act of 2013 proscribes sex discrimination, sexual harassment in the workplace and a quota system in public service employment (40:60 for either sex). Pillar 1 of the Malawi Decent Work Program (2011-2016) seeks to create more and better employment and income generation opportunities, and it pays attention to gender related challenges. This will be implemented in the context of the National Empowerment and Labour Policy (2014 - 2019), which identifies the employment of women and people with disabilities among its priority areas.

The following are other strategic actions that have taken place between 2014 and 2019 towards reducing poverty:

- a) Introduction of Cooperatives i.e. Farmers’ cooperatives

¹⁴ Section 29 of the Malawi Constitution

¹⁵ Section 30 of the Malawi Constitution

- b) Local Development Fund program on Forest restoration with gender considerations especially for young people who are selected based on equal quarters of Young women and Men
- c) National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2015 that has gender elements
- d) Public Works Program which has a gender mainstreaming approach
- e) Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF) and Malawi Enterprise Development Fund (MEDF) for SME
- f) Strengthened Legal Aid Bureau to provide low-cost legal services for women living in poverty.

Introduced or strengthened social protection programmes for women and girls (e.g. cash transfers for women with children, public works/employment guarantee schemes for women of working-age, pensions for older women) Malawi is also implementing the following programmes: Social Cash Transfer Program, School Feeding Programme, Farmers' cooperatives Programme, COMSIP, Local Development Fund Program on forest restoration, National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2015), Public Works Program and Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDEF), Malawi Enterprise Development Fund (MEDF) for SME, Jobs for the Youth Project (2018), National Agricultural Investment Programme (2018), National Plan Of Action On Women Economic Empowerment (2017-2022) and ICT Policy (2013). By 2018, Social cash transfer programme was benefitting 1.5 million individuals in 319,000 households of which 73% are female headed households, 26% are child headed households and 56% are female farmers who use the transfers to procure farm inputs and other household necessities.

Considering that acute poverty can be a source of discrimination, a Social Cash Transfer program (SCTP) is being implemented to provide social support to ultra-poor or labour constraint families and vulnerable children. In 2014, there were 118 female child headed households against 89 male child headed households beneficiaries currently, a total of 281,000 households in 28 districts have benefitted and two-thirds of these are female headed households. The total number of girls and boys under the age of 17 years benefiting from (SCTP) is 308, 706 and 304, 914 respectively. (MOGCSW, 2019)

Supported women's entrepreneurship and business development activities Most institutions working with women in the informal sector must provide services such as loans, training in business management, and training in the use of relevant technologies (i.e. bakery, poultry keeping, and food processing equipment). Institutions such as National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi (NASFAM), Community Savings and Investment Programme (COMSIP) and Non-governmental organisations assist women groups by linking them with markets. Some of organisations involved include Small and Medium Enterprises Development Institute (SMEDI) which partners with the government of Malawi and other role players to create an enabling environment, to facilitate access to finance, information and markets for MSMEs and to provide relevant, needs-based business development services; Small Producers Development Association (SPRODETA) with funding from Dan Church Aid has been empowering small producers and the marginalized men, women and youth with a focus on economic empowerment and marketing;

In addition, the Government of Malawi, through the ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism is implementing the Simplified trade regime strategy which is mostly benefiting women as part of Small Scale Enterprises.

The following policies, legislations, and strategies have also been developed:

- i. National Plan of Action on Women Economic Empowerment (2017 – 2022)
- ii. Malawi Decent Work Country program (2011-2016)
- iii. Engendering the Occupation and Safety policy to be responsive to women’s needs
- iv. National Intellectual Property Rights (2019)
- v. National Economic Empowerment Policy and Action Program which is still in draft form incorporates the needs of the youth and women (Ministry of Economic Planning and Development)
- vi. Public Procurement Act (2017) promotes the participation of women in public procurement.
- vii. Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Policy Strategy (2012-2017)
- viii. National Planning Commission Act (2017)
 - i. Reserve Bank of Malawi has been reviewing the banking interests rates downwards which has the potential to create a favourable economic environment for promotion of SMEs in accessing bank loans and credits

Key Issues

- Targeting of COMSIP and village savings and loan schemes is not routinely carefully guided by baselines and poverty profiles. Coverage also remains low, meaning that most deserving women, including those with disabilities may not be fully benefiting. Resources targeting these initiatives are concentrated at middle level, and much of it is not trickling down to micro-level.
- Low knowledge and access to sophisticated technology for value addition that meets international standards and insufficient programmes to support them in establishing appropriate linkages i.e. through interventions by the Ministry of Trade also prevents most women’s groups from breaking through international markets.
- Economic empowerment initiatives do not usually focus on women with disabilities as stipulated in the Disability Act

Recommendations

- i. There is urgent need to revise the minimum wage to align it with the cost of living
- ii. Introduce quotas for women in the Procurement Act so that more women can benefit from public procurements.
- iii. Government should fully enforce the Disability Act and ensure that women with disabilities are fully integrated in economic empowerment initiatives.
- iv. Need to create an enabling environment for access to ICT especially for women living in rural areas.

- v. There is need to invest more in small scale businesses in order to transform the economic environment at community level especially for women.

10. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to improve access to social protection for women and girls?

- Introduced or strengthened social protection for unemployed women (e.g. unemployment benefits, public works programmes, social assistance)
- Introduced or strengthened conditional cash transfers
- Introduced or strengthened unconditional cash transfers
- Introduced or strengthened non-contributory social pensions
- Reformed contributory social protection schemes to strengthen women's access and benefit levels
- Improved access to the above for specific populations (e.g. women in informal employment, including domestic workers; migrant and refugee women; women in humanitarian settings)
- Other

Please provide details of up to three concrete examples of measures taken, including aims and scope of measures taken, target population, budget, impact evaluations, lesson learnt, and links to further information. Please also provide information about actions for specific groups of women and girls, such as those listed in question 3. Where relevant and possible, please provide data to support your responses. (2 pages max.)

Other: Policy Environment and Legal Framework:

Malawi has a number of Economic Empowerment policies like the micro finance policy which provides for the development of microfinance and identifies the major stakeholders critical to implementation of the policy. Some initiatives do exist specifically for women, such as the “Pamtondo” initiative, which is linked to Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCO) and the Malawi Union of Savings and Credit Cooperatives (MUSCCO). Through this initiative, women can mobilize 10-15 members then contribute money and open a bank account with a SACCO. However, the initiatives fall short of making specific affirmative action for women entrepreneurs. Access to credit is difficult for poor families, particularly poor women.¹⁶ Women remain largely engaged in informal trade because many lack the means to progress to higher levels of trade i.e. collateral.

Progress towards revising/enacting laws

The Constitution of the Republic of Malawi (1994) creates an enabling environment for ensuring women's equal rights and access to economic resources through the following guarantees:

¹⁶ SADC Gender Protocol 2015 Barometer, p. 159.

- a) Section 13 (a) requires the State to achieve and promote gender equality by adopting policies and passing legislation to ensure full participation of women in all spheres of life and to address social issues such as economic exploitation and the rights to property.
- b) Section 25 of the Constitution provides that all persons are entitled to development, including the right to education
- c) Section 24 (2) of the Constitution invalidates any law that discriminates against women. It also requires legislation to be passed to eliminate customs and practices that discriminate against women.
- d) Section 28 of the Constitution protects everyone's right to property.
- e) Section 29 of the Constitution guarantees the right to economic activity.
Section 30 of the Constitution stipulates that everyone has right to development; and that women, children and the disabled in are to be particularly given special consideration in the application of the right.

Introduced or strengthened conditional cash transfers Malawi has been implementing a number of social development programmes to enhance women's and girls' social protection. The programmes implemented under the period include: social cash transfer, public works, school feeding, Farm Input Subsidy (FISP), Community Policing, One Stop Centres, Decent and Affordable Housing, Water And Sanitation and other economic initiatives such as: National Plan of Action on Women Economic Empowerment (2017-2022) Savings And Credit Cooperatives, COMSIP, , Gender Equality Act (2013), Land Act (2017), Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act (2015), The Deceased Estates (Wills, Protection and Inheritance) Act (2010), Customary Land Act (2017), HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Management) Act (2018) , Procurement Act (2017), National Property Intellectual Rights Act (2019), Microfinance Act (2010) and SME Policy (2008), among others.

Key Issues:

- A number of progressive laws not usually enforced due to inadequate funding towards their implementation and monitoring. There is also inadequate dissemination of laws, leading to limited knowledge, particularly in rural areas.
- Land is mostly owned by men and physical assets are also registered in the husband's name. The problem with this is that most men do not allow women to use title deeds in their names to get loans because they consider it risky. It has also been reported that due to cultural factors, most business decisions are made by their husbands or other male relatives and this sometimes erodes women's control over their businesses.¹⁷
- Finance institutions lack social orientation and understanding of socio-economic needs in rural communities resulting in the exclusion of 53% of the population.¹⁸

¹⁷ Report on the Development of the Gender Equality Act, (2011) p. 98

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 35

- Further, women fail to benefit from initiatives such as the Malawi Entrepreneurship Development Fund (MEDF). Public funds are politicized on top of the fact that there is no stand-alone fund to specifically support emerging women entrepreneurs to be independent. The lack of gender sensitivity in most of these initiatives results in most women not benefiting as much as they should.¹⁹

Recommendations

- a. Fully implement the National Plan of Action on Women Empowerment which amongst other things provides for the creation of a fund for women's economic empowerment.
- b. Ensure the institutionalization of The Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA), make their data accessible, to capture their contribution to the GDP.
- c. Provide evidence-based information on how women are benefitting from Social Cash Transfer program.
- d. Disseminate and enforce Land and Inheritance laws

IMPROVED HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

11. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to improve health outcomes for women and girls in your country?

- Promoted women's access to health services through expansion of universal health coverage or public health services
- Expanded specific health services for women and girls, including sexual and reproductive health services, mental, maternal health and HIV services
- Undertaken gender-specific public awareness/health promotion campaigns
- Provided gender-responsiveness training for health service providers
- Strengthened comprehensive sexuality education in schools or through community programmes
- Provided refugee women and girls as well as women and girls in humanitarian settings with access to sexual and reproductive health services
- Other

Please provide details of up to three concrete examples of measures taken, including aims and scope of measures taken, target population, budget, impact evaluations, lesson learnt, and links to further information. Please also provide information about actions for specific groups of women and girls, such as those listed in question 3. Where relevant and possible, please provide data to support your responses. (2 pages max).

Progress

Promoted women's access to health services through expansion of universal health coverage or public health services

¹⁹ Ibid

- Malawi is coordinating the implementation National Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Policy (SRHR) (2017) National Nutrition Policy and Strategy (2018-2022) Adolescent Girls and Young Women Strategy (2018-2022), Youth friendly health services strategy (2015-2020) Safe Motherhood Initiative, National Cervical Cancers Control Strategy (2016-2020) HIV Prevention Strategy (2015-2020), Malaria Control Programme, Malawi National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan (2015-2020), and Non-Communicable Disease Initiatives among others these initiatives have contributed to the decrease in HIV prevalence rate among women and men in the 15-49 age bracket from 10.6% to 8.8% between 2010 and 2016 MDHS 2015-16 (www.nsomalawi.mw)
- The government has further reviewed the National SRHR Policy (2017-2022) which provides for access to SRH information and services for all without discrimination. There is also the National Nutrition Policy and Strategy (2018-2023) and Adolescent Girls and Young Women Strategy (2018-2022).

Expanded specific health services for women and girls, including sexual and reproductive health services, mental, maternal health and HIV services

- There has been demonstrated financial and technical support towards programmes targeting Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW), and that Health budgets are progressively becoming gender responsive to address inequalities faced by women. Additionally, women and adolescent young women and girls are mobilised, organised and empowered as regards social accountability that include budget tracking of the health sector budget
- Malawi has a Safe Motherhood Program under the Ministry of Health that advocates for increased numbers of health workers and frontline staff. Furthermore, the Government has a Service Agreement with Christian Health Association of Malawi (CHAM) to offer a broad range of subsidized services within specific prescribed square kilometers i.e. for expectant mothers.
- In a bid to prevent complications associated with pre and post-natal problems and reduce maternal mortality especially in the rural areas, Government continues to construct Waiting shelters for expectant Mothers at almost all health facilities. Likewise, bring a husband to ante-natal clinics initiative has proved successful in terms of male involvement as it to issues of maternal Health.
- Distribution of free mosquito nets prioritizing to expectant mothers and under five children

Strengthened comprehensive sexuality education in schools or through community programmes

- Establishment of Youth Friendly Health Services Strategy (2015-2020) which provides training for health workers as well as Youth Friendly Health Service Corners and Clubs for Young People. The Strategy encourages the harmonization of health, education and youth ministry policies with the aim of improving youth awareness of and access to SRH services.
- Free Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccine program implemented in Lilongwe, Dedza, Salima and Dowa districts has reached out to 146,681 (132,794 school going girls and 13,897 out of school girls) as a preventive measure for cervical cancer
- The education syllabus has Life Skills Education as an examinable subject. This is one way of educating young women on SRHR issues so that they are able to understand such dynamics at an early age to prevent unwanted pregnancies and many other problems associated with their reproductive system

Undertaken gender-specific public awareness/health promotion campaigns

- Mobile Outreach Health Services targeting hard to reach areas to enable people in such areas access health services
- There has also been effective and sustained awareness for HIV/TB and other non-communicable diseases
- The Early Childhood Development Centres, coordinated by the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability, and Social Welfare, provide meals, health growth monitoring, and micronutrient supplements to the children. Further folic acid supplement is implemented in 6 districts reaching a total of 146,681 girls (132,784 school girls and 13897 out of school girls) in four districts of Lilongwe, Salima, Dedza, Dowa. In January 2018, Malawi launched HPV Vaccine, so far a total of 227,723 girls against one year target of 280,862 have been vaccinated country wide through schools as a platform for service delivery.

Key Issues:

- The 2017-2018 health budget allocation for Malawi was approximately 7.3% of the total budget (US \$177 billion). This budget was far less of what is expected as per the Abuja Declaration that obligates Member States to allocate 15% of the national budget to the health sector, this therefore continues to affect health service delivery where the most affected are women and girls.
- The major obstacle for the Ministry of Health and Population to achieve the delivery of affordable and quality services to women is that many rural communities continue to face an acute shortage of (a) health personnel and (b) accessible health. According to the World Bank, despite that 87 percent of Malawi's population live in areas considered rural, 96.6 percent of doctors are found in urban health facilities. The problem of distant health facilities, contributes to congestion, is faced more severely by women with disabilities, since they are not usually given preference in service provision.
- So far, there has been no deliberate effort to target girls with disabilities, particularly those who may not be in school. However, RHD is aware of this challenge, therefore

considering developing special strategies for girls with disabilities, similarly for women with disabilities in respect to cervical cancer programme.

- The withdrawal of Common Approach to Budgetary Support (CABS) by the traditional donors (such as UK, Iceland, Ireland, Germany) to Malawi means that 40% of the national budget is not available to contribute to the health sector budget resulting into a lot of gaps in service delivery

Recommendations

- Malawi Government must continuously invest in research on women's health and commit to implement recommendations from credible Research on women's health
- Coordination between stakeholders providing SRHR in Malawi needs to be strengthened

IMPROVED EDUCATION OUTCOMES AND SKILLS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

12. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to improve education outcomes and skills for women and girls?

- Taken measures to increase girls' access to, retention in and completion of education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and skills development programmes
- Strengthened educational curricula to increase gender-responsiveness and eliminate bias, at all levels of education
- Provided gender equality and human rights training for teachers and other education professionals
- Promoted safe, harassment-free and inclusive educational environments for women and girls
- Increased access to skills and training in new and emerging fields, especially Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and digital fluency and literacy
- Ensured access to safe water and sanitation services and facilitated menstrual hygiene management especially in schools and other education/training settings
- Strengthened measures to prevent adolescent pregnancies and to enable adolescent girls to continue their education in the case of pregnancy and/or motherhood
- Other

Please provide details of up to three concrete examples of measures taken, including aims and scope of measures taken, target population, budget, impact evaluations, lesson learnt, and links to further information. Please also provide information about actions for specific groups of women and girls, such as those listed in question 3. Where relevant and possible, please provide data to support your responses. (2 pages max.)

Progress

The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy MGDS III (2017-2022) recognizes education and skills development as one of the key priority areas and Malawi has conducive a non-discriminatory policy and legal environment. the Gender Equality Act (2013) reinforces the right to equal access to education and training, including non-discrimination between girls and boys and women and men in education standards, scholarships and other opportunities. It also

mandates the Government to ensure integration of female students in disciplines that are traditionally male-dominated through STEM initiative. To this effect, Malawi in collaboration with stakeholders has continued implementing following strategies to ensure women and girls attain equal and quality education: Malawi Education Act (2013), the National Educational Policy (2017), the 40:60 Recruitment Quota in public universities, National Girls Education Strategy (2014-2018). National Education Sector Plan (2008-2017) ; Educational Sector Implementation Plan (2014-2018); National Girls Education Strategy (2014), National Girls' Education Communication Strategy (2014-2017) , Re-Admission Policy (2018), Gender policies for all public Universities), Community by-laws on Education; Early Childhood Development Policy (2018), National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy (2017) National School and Nutrition Strategic Plan (2009-2018)

There has been an increase in budgetary allocation to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. In the 2018/19 Financial Year (FY) the Ministry got the highest percentage of the national budget.

Taken measures to increase girls' access to, retention in and completion of education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and skills development programmes

- Introduction of Community Technical Colleges in all the districts across the country have assisted more young women to learn vocational skills. TEVETA special programme for girls /women and introduction of Open Distance Learning (ODL) programs in all public Universities, allows flexibility for women who are usually fully occupied with other roles to study without being physically present at the institution; skills Training Development project for the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism (MoITT) that has a focus on young people; introduction of Tele-centers by the Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA) has benefitted women especially in the rural areas
- The Ministry of Education Science and Technology has revised the Readmission Policy (2018) from a ministerial declaration to a substantive Policy. Furthermore, a Girls Trust fund has been established providing scholarships for girl's secondary education.
- Provision of maternal health services for students in tertiary institutions; ramps for learners living with disabilities in most education institutions; Students living with disability are given preference for campus accommodation; intensifying education of learners with special needs by providing the necessary support and facilities to ensure that they access and complete their education and life skills education was introduced initially as non-examinable subject but it is now examinable. This is one way of addressing the special needs of female students who face increased vulnerabilities such as gender-based violence and HIV in schools.

Strengthened educational curricula to increase gender-responsiveness and eliminate bias, at all levels of education

- The Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (GEWE) Programme helped to institutionalise gender courses in institutions of higher learning as part of building the capacity of research institutions in gender mainstreaming.
- *Besides, at Chancellor College "Gender and Law" is now a compulsory course for every law student. There has been introduction of gender programs at Chancellor College under the*

faculty of Social Science. Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) have also introduced a Bachelors and Masters of Gender.

Promoted safe, harassment-free and inclusive educational environments for women and girls

- Introduction of School Improvement Grants (SIG) in all primary schools across the country, directed towards maintaining boarding facilities, paying utilities and volunteer teachers, to some extent has helped to improve education standards. Similarly, government is constructing Girls hostel at some community Day Secondary Schools in order to mitigate the problem of drop out.

Other actions towards girls and women education (affirmative action)

- Increased number of institutions working on women's rights and girl education in particular
- Increased number of educated women
- Communities taking part in encouraging girl education
- Free primary education and more girls' bursaries at secondary level by various stakeholders
- School feeding programs
- Reviewing and engendering the school curriculum
- Adult literacy classes initiated by government
- More community day secondary schools and efforts on Menstrual Hygiene Management for girls.
- Enactment of bylaws at community level obligating parents to send girls to school.
- Government has introduced Adult literacy program at the same time those interested are encouraged to join the formal system of education

Key Issues:

- Low reception of the adult literacy programme by the communities
- Low numbers of women and girls interested in science subjects
- Policy documents are not readily available for reference in some divisional offices and schools i.e. re-admission policy.
- There are no support mechanisms for the teen mothers who face a hostile environment when they return to school and most of them are forced to drop out again.
- The isolation of adult literacy education from the mainstream education sector²⁰ makes it challenging for eligible women to acquire further education qualifications beyond basic literacy skills, at the same time, the programme heavily relies on volunteers and therefore affect commitment of learners

Recommendations

- a) Gender Policies for Universities need to be inclusive of academic and administrative staff unlike is the case now
- b) Preparing girls for re-integration under re-admission policy is a must do

²⁰ the adult literacy programme is spearheaded by the Ministry responsible for Gender

- c) The Ministry of Education’s budget needs to adhere to Gender Responsive Budgeting Guidelines jointly developed by the Ministries of Finance and Gender
- d) Simplify and disseminate all education policies and laws, including the Disability Act
- e) Incentives must be provided for Adult literacy programmes

FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE, STIGMA AND STEREOTYPES

Critical areas of concern:

- D. Violence against women
- I. Human rights of women
- J. Women and the media
- L. The girl child

13. In the last five years, which forms of violence against women and girls, and in which specific contexts or settings, have you prioritized for action?

- Intimate partner violence/domestic violence, including sexual violence and marital rape
- Sexual harassment and violence in public places, educational settings and in employment
- Violence against women and girls facilitated by technology (e.g. cyberviolence, online stalking)
- Femicide/ Feminicide
- Violence against women in politics
- Child, early and forced marriages
- Female genital mutilation
- Other harmful practices
- Trafficking in women and girls
- Other

Please provide details of up to three concrete examples of measures taken, including aims and scope of measures taken, target population, budget, impact evaluations, lesson learnt, and links to further information. Please also provide information about actions for specific groups of women and girls, such as those listed in question 3. Where relevant and possible, please provide data to support your responses. (2 pages max.)

PRIORITISED FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Malawi has prioritised Forms of Violence against Women and Girls, with their Specific Contexts or Settings.

- Sexual harassment and violence in public places, educational settings and in employment
- Violence against women in politics
- Child, early and forced marriages
- Other harmful practices

Progress

Malawi continued to implement measures that address all forms of violence against women and girls through implementation of the legal and policy frameworks such as, the Malawi Growth Development Strategy II and III, Gender Equality Act (2013), Prevention of Domestic Violence Act 2006, Trafficking in Persons Act 2015, Deceased Estates (Wills, Inheritance and Protection) Act (2011), National Plan for Action to Combat Gender Based Violence (2014-2022). Land Act (2016); Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act (2015), National Children Policy (2019); Gender Policy (2015), National Strategy On Ending Child Marriages (2018-2023), Action Plan on People With Albinism (2018-2022) Plan of Action on Ending Violence Against Children(2017-2022), 50:50 Campaign, chiefs by-laws on ending child marriages, among others . The government is also coordinating the implementation of on-going related campaigns such as Ndiulula (I won't be silent), Leken and Girls Not Brides

These measures are meant to address various forms of violence such as physical, sexual, economic and psychological manifesting in the political setting, work places, public places and domestic setting. These measures have consequently led to an increase in reporting of cases of VAWG (www.gender.gov.mw)

Trafficking in women and girls

The Trafficking in Persons Act of 2015 provides for absolute protection of women, protecting them as victims of trafficking, limit the extent to which they could be abused for economic gains, provides for obligation for shelter and safety rooms. During substantive trial, the law provides for coordinated witness protection. Government of Malawi has also supported initiatives to establish transit homes for victims of trafficking. For example, Salvation Army Feed the Children, Chisomo Children's Club, SOS children village and Youth Net and Counselling Organization (YONECO). Likewise, establishment of the trans-border coordination through the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation. This facilitates repatriation of victims of trafficking and handing over of suspects.

Enabling Environment for Accountability:

Additionally, Government of Malawi has established a Commission of Inquiry into the violence and brutal atrocities against persons of with albinism in order to understand the

underlining factors of the increased incidences of violence against person with albinism. The Government is equally commended for not only committing financial support towards the implementation of National Plan of Action, but also for clearly demonstrating in the Terms of Reference of the Commission of Inquiry, unreserved commitment towards and high level compliance with provisions of the CEDAW 2015 Committee recommendations and Africa's Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa commonly known as the 'Maputo Protocol'

Key Issues

- Though Malawi has demonstrated commitment to address capacity gaps of frontline staff responsible for protection children and women but there is lack of coordination in respect of case management and effective referral system, thriving harmful practices, religious beliefs that violate the rights of women and girls, stereotypes and patriarchal ideologies that prevent women and girls to fully realize their rights.
- A review of the Prevention of the Domestic Violence Act (PDVA) by the Law Commission revealed the law has some technical limitations but that has not stopped the courts from using the orders provided for in the Act.

Key Recommendations

- Government of Malawi to prioritize revitalization of information management systems to ensure solid, durable and reliable source of information for future programming and for all stakeholders.
- Government should replicate best practices on combating gender-based violence and strengthen integrated referral mechanisms
- Simplify, translate, print and disseminate existing gender related laws and policies and Intensify awareness campaigns on VAW

14. What actions has your country prioritized in the last five years to address violence against women and girls?

- Introduced or strengthened violence against women laws, and their enforcement and implementation
- Introduced, updated or expanded national action plans on ending violence against women and girls
- Introduced or strengthened measures to increase women's access to justice (e.g. establishment of specialist courts, training for the judiciary and police, protection orders, redress and reparations, including for femicide cases)
- Introduced or strengthened services for survivors of violence (e.g. shelters, help lines, dedicated health services, legal, justice service, counselling, housing)
- Introduced or strengthened strategies to prevent violence against women and girls (e.g. in the education sector, in the media, community mobilization, work with men and boys)

Please provide details of up to three concrete examples, including aims and scope of measures taken, target population, budget, impact evaluations, lesson learnt, and links to further information. Please also provide information about actions for specific groups of women and girls, such as those listed in question 3. Where relevant and possible, please provide data to support your responses. (2 pages max.)

Introduced or strengthened violence against women laws, and their enforcement and implementation Malawi strengthened implementation of the following legal and policy frameworks to address violence against women and girls: Gender Equality Act 2013, Prevention of Domestic Violence Act 2006, and Trafficking in Persons Act 2015, Marriage Divorce and Family Relations Act 2015, Deceased Estates (Wills, Inheritance and Protection) Act (2011), Land Act (2016); Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act (2015); Trafficking in Persons Act (2015); Gender Policy (2015), Plan of Action on Ending Violence Against Children (2017-2022).

LEGISLATIONS, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES RESPONDING TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- National Action Plan to combating Gender Based Violence (2017-2022).
- The Marriage Divorce and Family Relations Act of 2015
- Trafficking in Persons Act 2015
- Immigration Act has been amended to align itself to the Trafficking in Persons Act in order to ensure that survivors of trafficking are duly protected.
- Constitutional Amendment of Section 22 (now Section 26) which establishes the definition of a child as any person below the age of 18.
- The Law Commission conducted an audit on all child and gender related laws to harmonize them to be in consistent with the Constitution.
- Mines and Minerals Act 2018 (Amended) intends to transform the roles and obligations on women in mining.
- Artisanal Small Scale Mining Policy has changed the narrative of women in mining in Malawi.
- Land Act 2018 has expressive legal provision that unequivocally provides sufficient lawful protection against any kind of violence.
- All public Universities in the country have developed Gender Policies to ensure that no woman is subjected to any form of violence

Introduced, updated or expanded national action plans on ending violence against women and girls Malawi also coordinated the development and implementation of the National Children Policy (2019) National Strategy On Ending Child Marriages (2018-2023), Action Plan on People With Albinism (2018-2022); chiefs by-laws on ending child marriages, among others . The government also coordinated the implementation of on-going related campaigns such as 50:50 Campaign, 16 Days of Activism against GBV, Ndiulula (I won't be silent), Leken and Girls Not Brides

Introduced or strengthened measures to increase women's access to justice (e.g. establishment of specialist courts, training for the judiciary and police, protection orders, redress and reparations, including for femicide cases)

- Introduction of mobile courts to increase coverage of judicial services to the people, introduction of the GBV helpline crises, Tithandizane National Child Helpline, Mother Group in schools to encourage and provide counselling to girl child on the importance of completing education, domestication of the UNSCR 1325 through the National Peace Architecture which continue to establish District Peace Committees across the country, among others.
- Malawi Judiciary and Malawi Police Service has demonstrated great commitment to supporting efforts to reduce or eliminate Gender Based Violence by introducing Mobile Courts which sit where the offence was committed for criminal cases or where the parties are in that event that matter is civil in nature. The Mobile Courts are further commendable considering that they are gender sensitive, all proceedings are heard in camera, identification of witnesses are private and confidential. More importantly, Mobile Courts utilize the Referral Pathway exacting assurance that victims are provided with psychosocial support and supportive documentary evidence prepared by Health Experts who treated the victim of injuries and recorded the extent of injury or consequence.

Introduced or strengthened services for survivors of violence (e.g. shelters, help lines, dedicated health services, legal, justice service, counselling, housing)

- In terms of institutional mechanisms, structures such as; Parents and Teachers Association, School Management Committees, Mother Groups, the Safe Spaces for Adolescent Girls are different options where girls and women can easily report in case they experience gender based violence. Furthermore, Government of Malawi with from Development partners, CSOs and Private sector i.e. Plan International and mobile networks such as TNM Malawi has Help Lines put in designated places to support GBV survivors
- Access to ICT has to some extent improved and therefore has assisted with processing of complaints and ultimately understanding what constitutes Gender Based Violence following the release of VAC report.

Challenges

- While the Malawi Police Service has established VSUs in all Police stations and some posts and units, however they lack adequate infrastructure, human and financial resources.
- Weak coordination of VAWG efforts
- Government of Malawi has not been able to establish own transit homes as temporary shelters for victims of Gender-based violence. However, currently services are being

offered and CSOs such as Salvation Army in Mchinji, Tikondane, Chisomo Children's Home, SOS Children's' village

- Implementation of TIP is problematic due to among other things; porous borders, border patrols, limited awareness, high levels of poverty, corruption, inadequate human and financial resources.

Recommendations

- Engage CBOs, communities, opinion and traditional leaders in attitude and behavioral change efforts.
- Strengthen Community Action Groups to conduct awareness, monitor, respond and report incidences of violence against women
- Build the capacity of girls in institutions of higher learning to be more assertive to prevent, resist, and report Violence against Women.

15. What strategies has your country used in the last five years to prevent violence against women and girls?

- Public awareness raising and changing of attitudes and behaviours
- Work in primary and secondary education, including comprehensive sexuality education
- Grassroots and community-level mobilization
- Shifting the representation of women and girls in the media
- Working with men and boys
- Survivor support e.g. provision of legal support for survivors of (political) violence through the 50/50 campaign, mobile courts
- Perpetrator programmes
- Other

Please provide details of up to three concrete examples, including aims and scope of measures taken, target population, budget, impact evaluations, lesson learnt, and links to further information. Please also provide information about actions for specific groups of women and girls, such as those listed in question 3. Where relevant and possible, please provide data to support your responses. (2 pages max.)

- Public awareness raising and changing of attitudes and behaviours
- Work in primary and secondary education, including comprehensive sexuality education
- Grassroots and community-level mobilization
- Working with men and boys
-

Malawi prioritised the Implementation of The National Strategy on Ending Child Marriages (2018-2023) National Plan of Action to Combat Gender Based Violence (2014-2022); aims at creating an enabling environment to prevent and respond to GBV in a holistic, participatory and multispectral manner.

Public awareness raising and changing of attitudes and behaviours Apart from strengthening these strategies, Malawi also coordinates the commemoration of International Women's Day, the Day of the African Child, and International Day of the Girl Child. World Rural Women's Day, 16 Days of Activism Against GBV, International Albinism Awareness Day, International Day Of Persons Living With Disabilities. World AIDS Day among others. The purpose of these commemorations is to raise public awareness on GBV and mobilise communities, MDAs CSOs development partners and donors to take concerted action to prevent and mitigate the impact of GBV

Grassroots and community-level mobilization Creation of Community Action Groups at Group Village level, Community Victim support units across the country, Police Victim Support Units and NGOs that respond to issues of Violence against women and girls

16. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls facilitated by technology (online sexual harassment, online stalking, non-consensual sharing of intimate images)?

- Introduced or strengthened legislation and regulatory provisions
- Implemented awareness raising initiatives targeting the general public and young women and men in educational settings
- Worked with technology providers to set and adhere to good business practices
- Other

Please provide details of up to three concrete examples, including aims and scope of measures taken, target population, budget, impact evaluations, lesson learnt, and links to further information. Please also provide information about actions for specific groups of women and girls, such as those listed in question 3. Where relevant and possible, please provide data to support your responses. (2 pages max.)

Introduced or strengthened legislation and regulatory provisions

- Malawi developed and is implementing the electronic transaction and cyber security act (2016) with the aim of regulating the online transmission of information related to sexual harassment, non-consensual sharing of intimate messages.

Implemented awareness raising initiatives targeting the general public and young women and men in educational settings

- Public awareness campaigns have been conducted countrywide and people are reporting on the abuse and misuse of various social media platforms. At least one perpetrator is reported convicted on charges related to albinism by June 2019 and other cases have been dismissed by the courts (<https://freedomhouse.org>)

17. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to address the portrayal of women and girls, discrimination and/or gender bias in the media?

- Enacted, strengthened and enforced legal reforms to combat discrimination and/or gender bias in the media
- Introduced binding regulation for the media, including for advertising
- Supported the media industry to develop voluntary codes of conduct
- Provided training to media professionals to encourage the creation and use of non-stereotypical, balanced and diverse images of women and girls in the media
- Promoted the participation and leadership of women in the media
- Established or strengthened consumer protection services to receive and review complaints about media content or gender-based discrimination/bias in the media
- Other

Please provide details of up to three concrete examples, including aims and scope of measures taken, target population, budget, impact evaluations, lesson learnt, and links to further information. Please also provide information about actions for specific groups of women and girls, such as those listed in question 3. Where relevant and possible, please provide data to support your responses. (2 pages max.)

Introduced binding regulation for the media, including for advertising

- Malawi continued coordinating the strengthening and implementation of the Electronic Transaction and Cyber Security Act (2016) with media stakeholders such as Malawi Communication Regulatory Authority (MACRA), Malawi Institute of Journalism (MIJ) the Polytechnic College and media houses.

Enacted, strengthened and enforced legal reforms to combat discrimination and/or gender bias in the media

- There has been development and mainstreaming of gender policies in some media houses, a development that is set to prevent gender bias in those media houses. The policies have led to media houses to report subjectively on incidences of violence against women and girls taking place in the country and reporting on women achievers without stereotypes
- The Malawi Computer Emergency Response Team (MCERT) Act (2016); makes provision for criminalizing offences related to computer systems and information communication technologies; and provide for investigation, collection and use of electronic evidence; and for matters. Using the same Act, MACRA and Malawi Police has on two occasions managed to arrest some musicians and charged them with insulting the modesty of women after posting demeaning songs online. However the Malawi Communication Regulatory Authority (MACRA) is currently facing some challenges to enforce the law due to several reasons among them being lack of awareness on the part of the general public.

Provided training to media professionals to encourage the creation and use of non-stereotypical, balanced and diverse images of women and girls in the media

- Gender Links has worked with 12 media houses in Malawi (out of 61), some of which have developed gender policies and action plans. The Nation Publications Limited, Malawi Institute of Journalism (MIJ), Radio Islam, Trans World Radio, Capital Radio and Joy Radio Zodiak Broadcasting Stations, Dzimwe radio are some of those that have gender policies. However, the percentage of media houses with Gender Policies is small and more work needs to be done to ensure that all the outlets have gender policies.

18. Has your country taken any action in the last five years specifically tailored to address violence against specific groups of women facing multiple forms of discrimination?

YES/NO

If YES, please list them and provide up to three concrete examples of measures taken, including aims and scope of measures taken, target population, budget, impact evaluations, lesson learnt, and links to further information. Please also provide information about actions for specific groups of women and girls, such as those listed in question 3. Where relevant and possible, please provide data to support your responses. (2 pages max.)

Malawi implemented the following specially tailored actions to address VAWG for women living in rural area, living with disabilities and living with HIV and AIDS: the disability act (2016) policy on the equalization of opportunities for persons living with disabilities (2006) National Plan of Action to Combat Gender Based Violence (2014-2022); National Action Plan on People With Albinism (2018-2022), Introduction of Disability Mainstreaming in the MDAs; Gender, HIV and AIDS Implementation Plan (2016-2020). (Also please refer to section one of the report)

PARTICIPATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND GENDER-RESPONSIVE INSTITUTIONS

<p>Critical areas of Concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> G. Women in power and decision-making H. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women I. Human rights of women J. Women and the media L. The girl child

19. What actions and measures has your country taken in the last five years to promote women’s participation in public life and decision-making?

- Reformed constitution, laws and regulations that promote women’s participation in politics, especially at decision-making level, including electoral system reform, adoption of temporary special measures, such as quotas, reserved seats, benchmarks and targets
- Implemented capacity building, skills development and other measures

- Encouraged the participation of minority and young women, including through sensitization and mentorship programmes
- Provided opportunities for mentorship, training in leadership, decision-making, public speaking, self-assertion, political campaigning
- Taken measures to prevent, investigate, prosecute and punish violence against women in politics
- Collected and analyzed data on women’s political participation, including in appointed and elected positions
- Other

Please provide details of up to three concrete examples of measures taken, including aims and scope of measures taken, target population, budget, impact evaluations, lesson learnt, and links to further information. Please also provide information about actions for specific groups of women and girls, such as those listed in question 3. Where relevant and possible, please provide data to support your responses. (2 pages max.)

Reformed constitution, laws and regulations that promote women’s participation in politics, especially at decision-making level, including electoral system reform, adoption of temporary special measures, such as quotas, reserved seats, benchmarks and targets

- Malawi continued coordinating the implementation of the following strategies to advance women’s participation in decision making in public life and other decision making bodies: the Gender Equality Act (2013), 50:50 campaign which aims at increasing representation of women in positions of leadership and decision making in key institutions, for instance, political parties, cabinet, parliament and local councils and the 40:60 of either sex recruitment strategy of females and males in the public sector.
- These measures have resulted in an increased number of women representations in public life and decision making positions. The matrix below summarises the situation:

Table 1: Women in Public Position

Category A: Women In Politics	2018	2019
Women representation in Cabinet (cabinet ministers)	15%	11 %
Deputy cabinet ministers	0	50%
Women in Parliament(Members of Parliament)	16.7%	23%
Leadership of parliament	33.3%	66.6%
Women representation – Ambassadors	25%	_25%
Local councils	11%	14.56%
Category B: Women In Managerial Positions (Public Sector)	2019	
Deputy Permanent Secretaries/ Principal Secretaries / Director Generals	27%	27%

Directors	22%	23%
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Table C: Women in the Judiciary

Category	2019
Registrars / Chief Justice	20%
President of the Courts	25%
Judges	27.7%
Magistrates	26.7%

Implemented capacity building, skills development and other measures

Provided opportunities for mentorship, training in leadership, decision-making, public speaking, self-assertion, political campaigning

- The Government, through the Ministry responsible for gender affairs, 50/50 Management Agency and other stakeholders and implemented a 50:50 campaign seeking to promote women's participation and representation in politics for the 2019 Tripartite Election.. This is a replica of the 2009 and 2014 initiative though with different approaches. The programme focused more on capacity building for aspiring candidates for both Parliamentary and Local Government positions. The Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) took an initiative to give a fifty percent discount on nomination fees for women and persons with disabilities and 25 percent discount for the youth.

Taken measures to prevent, investigate, prosecute and punish violence against women in politics

- The Gender and Elections/Violence Against Women (GEER) Monitoring room provided real time data on incidents of violence against in elections, reporting to the Police. The support has also been linked to legal assistance which is offered on a pro bono basis to the affected victims of violence who may not be able to afford the legal fees.

Encouraged the participation of minority and young women, including through sensitization and mentorship programmes

- Though there have been fluctuations in measures that have taken to elevate women to high decision-making positions within Government, some women have been appointed in powerful decision-making positions. Since 2014, women have occupied (though not consistently) positions of Chairperson of the Malawi Electoral Commission, Clerk of Parliament,, Law Commissioner, Solicitor General,, Director of Public Prosecutions, Ombudsman. Changes in Government administration have contributed to the fluctuations, with women being dropped and some being appointed to different positions under the administrations of the Democratic Progressive Party (May 2014 to May 2019) and two more females judges have appointed during the period under review

20. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to increase women's access to expression and participation in decision-making in the media, including through information and communication technologies (ICT)?

- Strengthened the provision of formal and technical vocational education and training (TVET) in media and ICTs, including in areas of management and leadership
- Taken measures to enhance access, affordability and use of ICTs for women and girls (e.g. free wifi hubs, community technology centers)
- Introduced regulations to advance equal pay, retention and career advancement of women within the media and ICT field
- Collaborated with employers in the media and ICT field to improve internal policies and hiring practices on a voluntary basis
- Provided support to women's media networks and organizations
- Other

Please provide details of up to three concrete examples of measures taken, including aims and scope of measures taken, target population, budget, impact evaluations, lesson learnt, and links to further information. Please also provide information about actions for specific groups of women and girls, such as those listed in question 3. Where relevant and possible, please provide data to support your responses. (2 pages max.)

Collaborated with employers in the media and ICT field to improve internal policies and hiring practices on a voluntary basis

- Malawi continued strengthening the coordination and implementation of the Gender Equality Act (2013) and capacity and backup technical support in gender mainstreaming. The Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) Malawi chapter in collaboration with Gender Links has provided training to 12 media houses in the country on gender responsive and non-stereotyped reporting and advertising.
- Gender Links has been building the capacity of media personnel in Malawi by providing training on a regular and/or continuing basis to ensure that both management and lower-level staff are gender responsive/sensitive in their reporting so as to avoid negative or stereotyped portrayal of women in reporting and advertising. The Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) Malawi chapter in collaboration with Gender Links has provided training to some journalists in the country on gender responsive and non-stereotyped reporting and advertising.
- Despite all the efforts, very few women occupy decision making position in most media houses; instead there are more into covering small events.

Introduced regulations to advance equal pay, retention and career advancement of women within the media and ICT field

- It is interesting to note though, for the first time in the history of Malawi, a female journalist is chairing the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) Malawi Chapter.

Strengthened the provision of formal and technical vocational education and training (TVET) in media and ICTs, including in areas of management and leadership

- Several institutions that include, Malawi Polytechnic, Malawi Institute of Journalism and other private training institution have introduced media related courses ranging

from certificate, diploma as well as Degree. There are indications that more young women have are opting to do journalism which was not common some 10 years ago.

21. Do you track the proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting)?

YES/NO

If YES, what is the approximate proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women?

Please provide information on the specific areas in which these resources have been invested as well as reflections on achievements and challenges encountered in making budgets gender-responsive.

Malawi through the national gender machinery in collaboration with development partners, has been tracking the proportional of the national budget that is invested in promotion of gender equality and women empowerment over the years. The aim is to track commitment and the allocation of resources for promotion of gender equality and women empowerment by all stakeholders

Tracking of the proportion of budget allocated to Fast-track the attainment of GEWE is done through commissioning of annual budget gender analysis. For the past five years, the following have been the trends. Gender Equality and Women Empowerment is the least funded programme in the Ministry of Gender Children Disability and Social Welfare. The proportion of the programme's budget to the Ministry's budget decreased from 12.7% to 1.6% between 2012/13 and 2015/16. It was however increased from 2.1% in 2016/17 to 2.9% in 2017/18. In 2015/16, (www.engenderhealth.org) gender specific budget across all MDAs amounted to MWK 1.2 billion, the highest level in six years. This was boosted by MWK 1.1 billion that was allocated for the construction of girls' hostels and implementation of interventions that were targeting pregnant women on ART. The specific allocation to the directorate of gender affairs however decreased from 12.7% to 1.6% between 2012/13 and 2015/16. It was however increased from 2.1% and 2.9% in 2016/17 and 2017/18 respectively. Overall, the national budget allocated. The specific areas in which the resources have been used include gender mainstreaming.

What is the approximate proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women?

- The approximate proportion is about 2% (slightly below 2%) of the total national budget, as per the 2018/19 Gender Analysis of the national budget.

Please, provide information on the specific areas in which the resources have been invested as well as reflection on the achievements and challenges encountered in making budgets gender responsive.

- The specific areas include women representation in decision making positions, Interventions focusing on supporting women and girls subjected to sexual violence

and interventions focusing on supporting elderly women and persons living with disabilities

- The achievements encountered in making budgets gender responsive include the engendering of the Programme Based Budgeting (PBB) Manual, engendering of the budget guidelines document and engendering of the treasury instructions. Furthermore, gender related inputs were also submitted to the Ministry of Finance to be incorporated into the Public Finance Management (PFM) Act, which is presently under review.
- In the absence of an engendered Public Finance Management (PFM) Act, issues of Gender Responsive Budgeting are mostly dealt with as a matter of policy and not law, which makes it difficult to enforce some of the crucial recommendations or interventions. For instance, guidelines for the preparation of the national budget may have guidance for Gender Responsive Budgeting, but if such guidance is not taken into account in the preparation of the actual budget, nothing much can be done presently. However, if the PFM Act spells this out as per the inputs submitted, then there shall be a legal obligation to follow it.

22. As a donor country, does your country track the proportion of official development assistance (ODA) that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting)?

YES/NO

Not applicable

If YES, please provide further information on the methodology, the scope of tracking, past trends and current proportion of investments.

Malawi is not a donor country but a recipient of development aid particularly for the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment at all levels.

23. Does your country have a valid national strategy or action plan for gender equality?

YES/NO

If YES, please list the name of the plan and the period it covers, its priorities, funding and alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the targets under SDG 5.

If YES, has the national action plan been costed and have sufficient resources been allocated to its achievement in the current budget?

Malawi developed and is implementing the Gender Equality Act (2013) implementation and monitoring plan (2016-2020) which has four priority areas: gender in education and training; gender mainstreaming in development sectors; gender in governance and human rights; and capacity of the national gender machinery. The plan is aligned to the UN Agenda 2030 and AU Agenda 2063.

The Government of Malawi enacted the Gender Equality Act (Act Number 3 of 2013) following the Presidential Assent of 9 April 2013. The Gender Equality Act is a very bold step taken by Malawi in the context of a roadmap for the implementation of the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (the ‘CEDAW’) ratified in 1979. Malawi signed the CEDAW on 12 March 1987. The basis for the development of a Gender Equality Act is that it is a response to what has been described as the ‘crisis of gender inequality’ (L Arehag *et al.*, 2006; see also UN Women, 2013); to develop a legal framework that seeks to resolve Malawi’s ranking on the GDI on gender equality (UNDP, 2008); to operationalise, among others, sections 13(a), 20 and 24 of the Constitution; the need to domesticate the principles of international human rights law on gender equality; to implement gender equality as one of the eight Millennium Development Goals; the recognition of gender equality as one of the key components for growth and poverty reduction (World Bank, 2001); and as a tool for the implementation of the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II.

At the national level, in July 2013, Malawi adopted a Joint Sector Strategic Plan on Gender, Children, Youth and Sports Sector Working Group. The Joint Strategy, which runs from 2013 to 2017, seeks to, primarily, ‘bring all the sector stakeholders together and harness their efforts to, among other things, strengthen the national policy and legal environment for protecting children, youth and women; improving and ensuring equitable access, control and utilization of social and economic services by these groups; enhancing their participation in decision making processes and sports; reducing illiteracy, violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect against these group

The enactment of the Gender Equality Act must be commended as it signifies Malawi’s fulfillment of her constitutional obligation; her commitment to national and international law and policy; the Act will lead to extensive national policy change to advance gender equality; it will lead to enhanced visibility of women in decision-making positions in Malawi’s public service; it contains extensive proposals to revamp the education sector; and it addresses critical health issues especially those relating to sexual and reproductive health rights.

Section 8 of the Act states that the Malawi Human Rights Commission shall administer and enforce the Act. The Human Rights Commission is best suited as the enforcement body under the Act because, under the Constitution, it has the primary functions of protecting and investigating violations of rights accorded under the Constitution or any other law. Indeed, under section 12 of the Human Rights Commission Act, the Commission has the capability ‘in every respect, to protect and promote human rights in Malawi in the broadest sense possible.’ It also has powers, on its own motion or following a complaint, to investigate violations of human rights from any person, class of persons or body. The Commission, as an independent, national institution, is, in that regard, qualified to oversee the enforcement of the Gender Equality Act.

However, the Human Rights Commission may only effectively discharge its mandate under the Act if it works together with key partners. Such key partners, among others, are the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare, and gender equality and other women empowerment lobby organisations

In order for the Gender Equality Act to be enforceable and not to avoid international human rights treaties, there are a number of steps that must be taken. First, there is need to effect consequential amendments in order that certain provisions of the Gender Equality Act may apply smoothly for example, the Government must institute urgent policy changes in a number of sectors. For example, the private sector can be encouraged to there is need to identify the relevant Government Ministries and departments to operationalize the Gender Equality Act. The Human Rights Commission must be supported with material and human resources for it to effectively discharge its mandate under the Act. Fifth, there is need for an urgent and massive civic education programme that sensitizes the general public on the scope of the law under the Gender Equality Act. As Nyirenda, J (as he then was) stated in *Republic v Chinthiti & Others (1)*,²¹ equality under the law ‘does not require mere formal or mathematical equality, but a substantial and genuine equality in fact.’

24. Does your country have an action plan and timeline for implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (if a State party), or of the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review or other United Nations human rights mechanisms that address gender inequality/discrimination against women?

YES/NO

If YES, please provide some highlights of the action plans and timeline for implementation.

1. Malawi developed and is implanting the Human Rights National Action Plan (2018-2023) the plan has consolidated all the UN Human Rights Instruments and mechanisms; the related AU instruments and mechanisms and SADC Instruments on human rights.
2. The main vehicle for implementing all treaty body recommendations is the Human Rights National Action Plan (draft) which has consolidated all treaty recommendations and responsible institutions for the recommendations. The lead Ministry, responsible for which has oversight functions for state party reporting and monitoring is the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs.
3. The other mechanism for implementing recommendations is through Sectoral action plans- each sector in Malawi that is responsible for recommendations has drafted plans with timelines, that it uses for implementing the recommendations, for example, the Ministry of Gender is the lead in all gender related matters as the national machinery responsible for gender and has developed several plans like the gender national plan, the disability mainstreaming strategy and the GBV national action plan just to make reference to a few which are also aligned to SDG Goal 5 Out of these plans, we have for seen them enacting key pieces of legislation i.e. Marriage Divorce and family Relations Act (2015) and the Trafficking in Persons Act (2015). The Malawi Human Rights Commission is mandated to lead on human rights issues and as such is also critical as a vehicle for protecting, promoting and monitoring of treaty body recommendations across all sectors.

²¹ [1997] 1 *Malawi Law Reports* 59, 65 (High Court)

4. Ministry of Justice through the Human Rights Unit follows up on all the timelines for the sectoral plans that are aligned to the Human Rights Action Plan

25. Is there a national human rights institution in your country?

YES/ NO

If YES, does it have a specific mandate to focus on gender equality or discrimination based on sex/gender?

If YES, please provide up to three examples of how the NHRI has promoted gender equality. (2 pages max.)

Malawi established the Malawi Human Rights Commission (MHRC) in 1998 as a constitutional body to carry out investigations and make recommendations on human rights issues in response to a complaint or on its own volition.

There is the Malawi Human Rights Commission, created by an act of Parliament called HRC Act, 1998, The Commission is empowered by the Constitution to carry out investigations and make recommendations on human rights issues in response to a complaint or on its own volition.

“The Human Rights Commission shall, with respect to the applications of an individual or class of persons, or on its own motion, have such powers of investigation and recommendation as are reasonably necessary for the effective promotion of the rights conferred by or under this Constitution, but shall not exercise a judicial or legislative function and shall not be given powers to do so.”²²

Further, section 12 of the Commission’s enabling Act, the Human Rights Commission Act (the HRC Act), outlines the Commission’s competence and powers as regards the promotion and protection of human rights as well as the investigation of human rights violations.

“The Commission shall be competent in every respect to protect and promote human rights in Malawi in the broadest sense possible and to investigate violations of human rights on its own motion or upon complaints received from any person, class or persons or body.”²³

The Gender Equality Act (2013), section 8 mandates the HRC to carry out investigations in relation to any gender issues on receiving a complaint; consider, think about and make recommendations to the Minister on any gender issues; provide information to anyone in a gender dispute on their rights, remedies or obligations; and help resolve any dispute concerning gender issues.

²² Malawi Constitution sections 129 and 130

²³ Malawi Human Rights Commission Buleya Lule’s Report (2019)

In relation to enforcement, the HRC in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender and other stakeholders have developed a GEA Implementation Plan (2016-2020) which is currently operational though meeting financial challenges.

The MHRC in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender and other stakeholders is coordinating the GEA Implementation Plan (2016-2020). It also conducts public hearings to create awareness and gather information on specific issues for further follow-up.

PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES

Critical areas of concern:

- E. Women and armed conflict
- I. Human rights of women
- L. The girl child

26. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to build and sustain peace, promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable

development and implement the women, peace and security agenda?

- Adopted and/or implemented a National Action Plan on women, peace and security
- Integrated women, peace and security commitments into key national and inter-ministerial policy, planning and monitoring frameworks
- Used communication strategies, including social media, to increase awareness of the women, peace and security agenda
- Increased budgetary allocations for the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda
- Taken steps to reduce excessive military expenditures and/or control the availability of armaments
- Re-allocated funds from military spending to social and economic development, including for gender equality and the empowerment of women
- Supported inclusive and gender-sensitive conflict analysis, early warning and prevention mechanisms
- Other

Please provide details of up to three concrete examples of measures taken, including aims and scope of measures taken, target population, budget, impact evaluations, lesson learnt, and links to further information. Please also provide information about actions for specific groups of women and girls, such as those listed in question 3. Where relevant and possible, please provide data to support your responses. (2 pages max.)

26. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to build and sustain peace, promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and implement the women, peace and security agenda?

- Integrated women, peace and security commitments into key national and inter-ministerial policy, planning and monitoring frameworks

- Other

Integrated women, peace and security commitments into key national and inter-ministerial policy, planning and monitoring frameworks: Malawi does not have a National Action Plan on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. Women in Peace building Forum established in October 2016 to champion the development of the National action Plan. Malawi has since the promulgation of the Constitution put into effect a number of its provisions into enabling legislation as well as translated a lot of its international obligations like under CEDAW, CRC, Palermo Convention to name a few.

Other: Peace accords with gender provisions: Having had relative peace and stability since independence, Malawi has not entered into any peace agreements of which women were involved in a formal negotiations process. However, women convened at a peace-building conference in October 2016 which resulted in the creation of the National Women in Peace-building Forum. The Forum aims to mobilize women and to advocate for the inclusion of women in peacebuilding and peace processes, including for advancement of a NAP on UNSCR 1325. It will be under the supervision of the National Peace Architecture in the Office of the President and Cabinet

27. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to increase the leadership, representation and participation of women in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, humanitarian action and crisis response, at decision-making levels in situations of armed and other conflicts, and in fragile or crisis settings?

- Promoted and supported women’s meaningful participation in peace processes and the implementation of peace agreements
- Promoted equal participation of women in humanitarian and crisis response activities at all levels, particularly at the decision-making level
- Integrated a gender perspective in the prevention and resolution of armed or other conflict
- Integrated a gender perspective in humanitarian action and crisis response
- Protected civil society spaces and women’s human rights defenders
- Other

Please provide details of up to three concrete examples of measures taken, including aims and scope of measures taken, target population, budget, impact evaluations, lesson learnt, and links to further information. Please also provide information about actions for specific groups of women and girls, such as those listed in question 3. Where relevant and possible, please provide data to support your responses. (2 pages max.)

Promoted and supported women’s meaningful participation in peace processes and the implementation of peace agreements: Malawi has female representation in the SADC mediation reference group. In addition, Women groups and stakeholders in Malawi continue to ensure peace is upheld in during elections using instruments such as the Lilongwe Peace

Declaration which was signed by all political parties. This has contributed to the peace and stability that Malawi has enjoyed in its Tripartite elections.

Integrated a gender perspective in the prevention and resolution of armed or other

conflict: *Women's participation in security sector institutions:* The Malawi Defence Force (MDF) recruited its first female soldiers in 1999, when 50 women were recruited. The Malawi Defence Force Act commits the MDF to maintaining a healthy, well trained, equipped, and disciplined and gender sensitive force. Furthermore, the MDF has adopted a Gender Policy, the focus of which is to eliminate gender inequalities within the rank and file, as well as the communities they serve, and to guarantee women's representation in both recruit and officer cadets training. Currently, women constitute 8% of the MDF. Its highest-ranking female officer is a Major (up from the rank of Captain). The MDF, however, is still handicapped by inadequate resources that impede its ability to create equitable environments for men and women, most noticeably in terms of accommodation.

There are currently 238 women (23%) in the police service, down from 26% in 2014. There is a Malawi Police Service Women's Network, which was launched on 23 April 2014 with the theme 'Forward with the empowerment of police women to fully contribute to policing'. There are still areas of discrimination; however, as the MPS does not permit women officers who are married to civilians to stay in police owned houses.

Recruitment in Malawi Police Service does not discriminate in terms of gender. To date there are 2991 female Police officers representing 24% of all Police officers in the service and there was a 2% increase from 2014. The MPS had a female Deputy Inspector General until June 2014 and over the years there was a nomination of a female to be an Inspector General through Mary Nangwale in 2000 which was rejected by Parliament. There is a Malawi Police Women network which was established on 23 April 2014 to assist females in the service.

Malawi has 946 peacekeepers, of which 103 are women (10.9%). Measures have been taken to increase the number of women deployed and ensure that there are always women available for a peacekeeping mission. Currently, 7.2% (62 out of 856) of Malawi's MONUSCO battalion and 47.6% (41 out of 86) of Malawi's UNAMID police officers are female. Source: http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2017/jun17_3.pdf

The MPS still has a lot of areas which it has to work on as they discriminate against women in the service like service standing order number 31 which stipulates that there permission must be given for a female police officer when she wants to be married or female police officers cannot bring male spouses into the police houses which is a privilege available to male police officers. Furthermore a female police officer cannot be married before completion of 6 months from the police training college. Incidentally, sexual harassment is also one of the big issues of concern in the Malawi Police Service according to survey which was conducted in 2014 which revealed that 80% of officers have been sexually harassed in one way or the other but most cases were not reported.

The Prisons Act commits to a responsive and equitable prison service. The Strategic Plan for Correctional Services commits it to mainstreaming cross-cutting issues such as HIV, gender and the environment. Currently Malawi has 85% male prison warders and 15% women prison

warders. The prison population stands at 12 129 with women comprise just 1.1% of the prison population.

[Integrated a gender perspective in humanitarian action and crisis response](#)

Protected civil society spaces and women’s human rights defenders: Since Malawi’s independence in 1964, CSO have mushroomed. The number of CSOs in Malawi increased from 104 in 2001 to 359 in 2011. Today, there are estimated to be over 600 NGOs registered with the Council for on-Governmental Organisation of Malawi (CONGOMA) in Malawi (ICNL, 2014). The UN in Malawi has supported CSOs through capacity building, financial and technical support. The UN has specifically supported National Gender Coordinating on GEWE including shadow reporting and national advocacy campaigns on GBV, SRHR and SGBV. Furthermore, the UN has mobilized other networks to support the advocacy on child marriages and human trafficking legal reforms. Civil Society in Malawi recognizes and relies on UN technical and financial support in achieving SDG goals on GEWE.

Malawi has an active civil society working in various issues in governance, human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment. However, women’s organizations and women human rights defender play a small significant role in GEWE and EVAWG including harmful cultural practices. The momentum around SDGs, the development of the 2016 National Response Plan on GBV and other gender related plans, creates an enabling environment for CSOs and women organizations, women human rights defenders to be involved in raising awareness, monitoring, advocating and lobbying for gender responsive policies, enforcement of laws and forging new partnerships.

[Progress](#)

Pursuant to UNSCR 2250, the National Peace Architecture Project is supporting the growth of National Youth Peace Forum as a tool for mobilizing adolescent girls and young people to seriously take part in peace building initiative. The National Youth Peace Forum is a combination of four regional chapters that were established following rigorous training in respect of Conflict Mapping, Causes of Conflicts, Fundamental Principles of Conflict Management and Early Warning and Rapid Response conflict Management Strategy,

The Public Affairs Committee (PAC) is also implementing a similar social cohesion project placing more focus on women from faith-based organization. In this approach, Women of Faith have also been organized into formal structures where they reach out to different communities instilling passion in adolescent girls and women to act fervently for maintenance of peace in Malawi. Drawing participants from National Youth Peace Forum, Women in Peace Forums, and Women of Faith Peace Forum, UNDP has invested in providing women alongside men in ‘Insiders Mediators Training.’

In October 2018 with support from UNDP, the Government of Malawi demonstrated great commitment to monumental importance of UNSCR 1325 by commemorating 15 years of the Resolution at a grand occasion presided over by the First Lady, Professor Gertrude Mutharika.

Recommendation

The Government of Malawi must ensure that institutional mechanism is in place unequivocally to prevent women from all forms of access to drugs and alcohol abuse. This effort will ensure that Malawi female soldiers are consistently rated as highly disciplined and professional during peacekeeping missions away from home.

28. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to enhance judicial and non-judicial accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and violations of the human rights of women and girls in situations of armed and other conflicts or humanitarian action and crisis response?

- Implemented legal and policy reform to redress and prevent violations of the rights of women and girls
- Strengthened institutional capacities, including of the justice system and transitional justice mechanisms as applicable, during conflict and crisis response
- Strengthened capacity of security sector institutions on human rights and prevention of sexual and gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse
- Increased access of conflict-affected, refugee or displaced women to violence prevention and protection services
- Taken measures to combat illicit arms trafficking
- Taken measures to combat the production, use of and trafficking in illicit drugs
- Taken measures to combat trafficking in women and children
- Other

Please provide details of up to three concrete examples of measures taken, including aims and scope of measures taken, target population, budget, impact evaluations, lesson learnt, and links to further information. Please also provide information about actions for specific groups of women and girls, such as those listed in question 3. Where relevant and possible, please provide data to support your responses. (2 pages max.)

Implemented legal and policy reform to redress and prevent violations of the rights of women and girls

- UNSCR 1325 as the first resolution of the most powerful UN body that exposed the gender specific impact of armed conflicts and acknowledged women's voices in international peace and security. The provisions of the resolution encompass women's participation in peace and security governance, women's (and men's) protection from sexual violence, conflict preventions, and post-conflict peace building. Resting on these four pillars, UNSCR 1325 challenges the traditionally masculinized and militaristic peace and security realm, which excludes the experiences and contributions of women.²⁴

²⁴ <https://wilpf.org/national-action-plans-localising-implementation-of-unscr-1325/>

- In keeping with non-discrimination principles, Malawi Defense Force (MDF) started recruiting the first cohort of female soldiers in 1999. At the moment, women constitute 7% of the total number of MDF soldiers. The highest female rank is of a Lieutenant Colonel and others hold different positions. MDF has been involved in peace building operations since 1994 in Rwanda. Notable peace building was in Rwanda, Angola, Ivory Coast, Liberia, and Kosovo, Israel & currently in Democratic republic of Congo (DRC). Female members have been involved in PSO in Cote D'voire & DRC. Based on the MDF Act females are deployed in mission areas as supporting staff but not as combatant
- The review report acknowledges excellent reputation of Malawi female soldiers in Armed Conflicts, known to local people as those that can defuse tense environment with great professionalism, they are quick at nurturing rapport and permanently with the local communities particularly amongst women and children .It is well established that MDF female Soldiers have progressively realized the reputations cited herein while serving diligently in areas of humanitarian response, Base Protection Office management and procedures, provision of health services to female victims, assisting female ex-combatant during DDR and providing support and counselling to victims of sexual gender based violence. It is worth noting that female soldiers receive training to provide psychosocial support and other forms of humanitarian response to adolescent girls and fellow women displaced by natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes as was the case with Cyclone IDAI.

29. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to eliminate discrimination against and violations of the rights of the girl child?

- Taken measures to combat negative social norms and practices and increased awareness of the needs and potential of girl children
- Strengthened girls' access to quality education, skills development and training
- Tackled disadvantages in health outcomes due to malnutrition, early childbearing (e.g. anaemia) and exposure to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases
- Implemented policies and programmes to reduce and eradicate child, early and forced marriage
- Implemented policies and programmes to eliminate violence against girls, including physical and sexual violence and harmful practices
- Implemented policies and programmes to eradicate child labour and excessive levels of unpaid care and domestic work undertaken by girl children
- Promoted girls' awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life
- Other

Please provide details of up to three concrete examples of measures taken, including aims and scope of measures taken, target population, budget, impact evaluations, lesson learnt, and links to further information. Please also provide information about actions for

specific groups of women and girls, such as those listed in question 3. Where relevant and possible, please provide data to support your responses. (2 pages max.)

Implemented policies and programmes to reduce and eradicate child, early and forced marriage

- Malawi launched the National Strategy to End Child Marriages 2018 which spells out strategic intervention areas. Consequently, the Government has now embarked on Budgeting Scoping to track stakeholders' expenditures on ending child marriages. This is envisaged to provide evidence-based advocacy on budget support to ending child marriages.
- In 2017, the National Assembly amended the provision in the Republican Constitution on family and marriage raising the minimum age for marriage from 15 to 18 years. The Constitutional Amendment of 2017 deleted subsection 7 of Section 22, which provided that for persons between the age of fifteen, and eighteen years a marriage could be entered into but only with the consent of their parents or guardians. By deleting the subsection, the consent of parents or guardians will no longer validate marriage of underage persons. This is therefore good progress in the fight to end early or child marriages. Malawi Constitution Section 23 (6) was also amended to define a child as any person below the age of 18 years. The amendment aligned the age of a child to the one recognized at international and regional levels. The old provision stated that; for purposes of this section, children shall be persons under the age of sixteen years. The effect of the amendment is that it harmonized the age of a child for all purposes. Based on the amendment, the Malawi Law Commission conducted an audit of existing pieces of legislation and policies in order to harmonize many different laws that were inconsistent with the Constitution.

Strengthened girls' access to quality education, skills development and training

- The Gender Equality Act of 2013 emphasizes on quotas in the enrollment of students at tertiary level. 40 to 60% of either gender group.
- The Government has adopted and rolled out a number of policy frameworks to promote girls education such as National Strategy on Girls Education, Re admission Policy; National Communication Strategy on Girls Education. Further Girls Scholarship has been established targeting the needy girls to access quality education; Increased learning time for lower classes from three to four hours. Similarly, the sector defined a series of innovative strategies including: a strategy to tackle repetition.
- Government has demonstrated its commitment to the education sector by increasing its share of overall Government recurrent expenditures from 20% in 2008 to 27% in 2016 in a particularly difficult financial context characterized by a decline in GDP per capita and erratic financial support from the Development Partners.

- Nonetheless a 36% increase in secondary students was achieved since 2012 because of a multi-pronged strategy that includes: construction, rehabilitation and upgrading of schools; use of temporary classrooms; introduction of double- shifting; establishment of open secondary schools; and opening of new private schools. School upgrading included 31 CDSSs, of the 120 that were planned, and one District Boarding school; two new government schools were built out of the three that were planned.

COMBATING NEGATIVE SOCIAL NORMS AND PRACTICES

Taken measures to combat negative social norms and practices and increased awareness of the needs and potential of girl children

- Malawi government with its partners has undertaken a number of research studies on traditional practices to inform programming on the girl child. Some of these research studies are: Mapping of Marriage officiated in Nkhoma Synod (Inter Faith and Nkhoma Synod, 2018); Survey Research on Harmful Practices (UNICEF, 2019) These research work has revealed other dimensions that on child marriages that will enhance implementation of the National Strategy to End Child Marriages. The communities through their chiefs have come up with community by laws which have led to chiefs developing their own by-laws on critical issues affecting the girls' child, inter alia, child marriages, gender-based violence. Through implementation of these by-laws about 30,000 girls have been withdrawn from child marriages and back to school. Religious communities have been trained on child protection and are currently integrating child protection messages in their teachings and training.
- Of a particular importance is the introduction of positive gender socialization in early childhood development centers and community-based children's centers where by children will have to go through a gender sensitive curriculum and their care givers capacitated in positive gender socialization process. It is envisaged that through this life cycle approach a lot child will grow up with gender equality values.
- The Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare have worked closely with traditional leaders to develop Community norms popularly known as bylaws against harmful practices. This is good progress especially when communities are interested to expedite to eradicate such evil vices that violate rights of innocent girls.
- Judicial Activism has demonstrated great commitment to support ending harmful and dangerous cultural practices. Court are exercising discretion when hearing matters of violence against girl child with full knowledge that unless judicial precedents are set, harmful practices will continue to suppress full realization of rights of girls.

Key Issues

- Cultural attitudes are not easy to eliminate and therefore there is need to replicate/adapt effective approaches that have been tested and tried, even though, most good interventions are implemented at a very low scale
- Some communities seem stuck with the status quo of marrying young girls though they may be well aware of the existing punitive laws. However, due to poverty, at

times they are left with few options other than trading children in exchange of goods for their own benefit.

Key Recommendations:

- National level approach should be put in place to guide engagement with chiefs on eliminating harmful practices against girls
- There is need to popularize the declaration of commitment by the State President, Professor Peter Mutharika as well as for paramount chiefs on ending child marriage

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION, PROTECTION AND REHABILITATION

Critical areas of concern:

I. Human rights of women

K. Women and the environment

L. The girl child

30. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to integrate gender perspectives and concerns into environmental policies?

- Supported women's participation and leadership in environmental and natural resource management and governance
- Strengthened evidence and/or raised awareness about gender-specific environmental and health hazards (e.g. consumer products, technologies, industrial pollution)
- Increased women's access to and control over land, water, energy, and other natural resources
- Promoted the education of women and girls in science, engineering, technology and other disciplines relating to the natural environment
- Enhanced women's access to sustainable time- and labour-saving infrastructure (e.g. access to clean water and energy) and climate-smart agricultural technology
- Taken measures to protect and preserve the knowledge and practices of women in indigenous and local communities related to traditional medicines, biodiversity and conservation techniques
- Taken steps to ensure that women benefit equally from decent jobs in the green economy
- Monitored and evaluated the impact of environmental policies and sustainable infrastructure projects on women and girls
- Other

Please provide details of up to three concrete examples of measures taken, including aims and scope of measures taken, target population, budget, impact evaluations, lesson learnt, and links to further information. Please also provide information about actions for specific groups of women and girls, such as those listed in question 3. Where relevant and possible, please provide data to support your responses. (2 pages max.)

Progress

Supported women's participation and leadership in environmental and natural resource management and governance

- The Ministry of Natural Resources and Climate Change Management has been implementing the 50:50 representations of men and women in its Village Natural

Resources Management Committees, which are established throughout the country. In terms of participation of women in natural resources activities, the experience of most NGOs working in environment is that between 60 and 90 percent of committee members are women. In the village management committees for water resources and sanitation, women constitute between 30 percent and 50 percent, and they are trained with their male counterparts in the management of the water pumps. Increasingly, women are also participating in conservation agriculture because in addition to increased crop yield, it reduces time spent working on the farm. Women are producing ceramic stoves and honey as a business to sustain their livelihoods.

- In terms of decision making within the Ministry of Natural Resources and Climate Change Management, one of the two Principal Secretaries is a woman, all the three Directors are men, and there are 13 women Assistant Directors including three Project managers. There are two female regional officers out of three. And of the 23 District Environmental Officers, eight are women. While this is good progress, more effort to achieve gender balance is necessary. Forestry Sector has almost 50/50 gender representations in the top positions while the EAD is headed by a woman.

Enhanced women's access to sustainable time- and labour-saving infrastructure (e.g. access to clean water and energy) and climate-smart agricultural technology

- The Electricity Supply Corporation of Malawi (ESCOM) and Electricity Generation Company (EGENCO) has developed a Social and Gender Inclusion Policy that seeks to address issues of social inclusion and gender within the energy sector with support from MCA. Furthermore, Malawi Rural Electrification Program (MAREP) one to eight has deliberately targeted rural areas in order to mitigate the effects of deforestation due to use of firewood.
- Enactment of the Disaster Preparedness and Relief Act

Key Issues

- Poor access to improved energy contributes to risks of: sexual exploitation of girls in self-boarding facilities by older men; sexual attacks of women due to lack of/inadequate street lighting; sexual attacks of women as they walk long distances to collect firewood, water and access grinding mills etc.
- The major problem is how to make more men participate in environmental and climate change management activities because in every district, women's participation of women in activities such as tree planting is always in the majority. Yet most men are culprits of deforestation which has adverse negative effects on women.

In addition to mere participation, women also have to be more empowered to participate meaningfully in decision making at community levels as they sometimes tend to relegate leadership positions to men.

Recommendations

- The energy sector must adopt and implement clear strategies and programmatic measures to enable various energy sources to suitably and sustainably support women's and girls' development, if they are to contribute to the improvement of development indicators for women and girls in Malawi

INTEGRATE GENDER PERSPECTIVES INTO POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION, CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND MITIGATION

31. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to integrate gender perspectives into policies and programmes for disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and mitigation?

- Supported women's participation and leadership, including those affected by disasters, in disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and mitigation policies, programmes and projects
- Strengthened the evidence base and raised awareness about the disproportionate vulnerability of women and girls to the impact of environmental degradation and disasters
- Promoted access of women in situations of disaster to services such as relief payments, disaster insurance and compensation
- Introduced or strengthened and implemented gender-responsive laws and policies related to disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and mitigation (e.g. disaster laws addressing vulnerability of women in disaster)

Please provide details of up to three concrete examples of measures taken, including aims and scope of measures taken, target population, budget, impact evaluations, lesson learnt, and links to further information. Please also provide information about actions for specific groups of women and girls, such as those listed in question 3. Where relevant and possible, please provide data to support your responses. (2 pages max.)

Progress

Introduced or strengthened and implemented gender-responsive laws and policies related to disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and mitigation (e.g. disaster laws addressing vulnerability of women in disaster)

The 2018/19 Fiscal year Malawi's Budget had an allocation of afforestation program for all district councils in the country and emphasizing on participation of young women.

Malawi has adopted the National Climate Change Management Policy 2016 whose goal is to create an enabling policy and legal framework for a pragmatic, coordinated and harmonized approach to climate change management. The Policy provides strategic direction for Malawi's priorities for climate change interventions and outlines an institutional framework for the application and implementation of adaptation, mitigation, technology transfer and capacity building measures. The Policy is a key instrument for managing climate change in the country and should act as a guide for integrating climate change into development

planning and implementation by all stakeholders at local, district and national levels in order to foster the country's socio-economic growth and subsequently sustainable development.

Amongst the key objectives of the policy are to integrate cross-cutting issues (including gender consideration) into climate change management through an appropriate institutional framework) by mainstreaming gender and issues affecting the disadvantaged groups into all climate change strategies, plans and programmes; and Integrate climate change into planning, development, coordination and monitoring of key relevant sectors in a gender sensitive manner.¹ Furthermore, the Policy recognizes Gender Equality as one of its guiding principles by stating that “women and girls are disproportionately affected by climate change and are more vulnerable to its impacts. Gender equality must therefore be promoted as a response both in terms of mainstreaming as well as through specific focused intervention”¹

Additionally, the new National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2012 -2016) is addressing the concerns of vulnerable groups, including women. Under the National Climate Change Programme, a consultancy on Gender and Climate Change has just been finalized.

In terms of humanitarian response plans, recovery plans, Malawi has a National Disaster Risk Management Institutional Structure which stemming from the Cabinet up to the village level which are focused on risk reduction, preparedness, response and recovery. It has developed the Malawi 2015 Floods Post Disaster Needs Assessment Report which took stock of the effect of the 2015 floods and highlights Malawi’s recovery plan. Further, the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) was developed under the Malawi Floods Emergency Recovery Project which envisages to restore livelihoods and food security for households in the flood affected districts, rehabilitate/reconstruct damaged roads and bridges in flood affected districts, rehabilitate irrigation schemes damaged by floods in flood affected districts, rehabilitate/reconstruct schools and health facilities in flood affected districts and support the design of disaster resilience infrastructure for flood prone areas. In terms of practical aspects of responses during floods, during the 2015 floods, the MDF and MPS were deployed to flood areas with the later setting up specialized units to ensure speedy handling of SGBV incidents.

While the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (III) recognize gender balance as one of the cross-cutting issues in its preamble, it does not necessarily address gender issues under the Environmental sustainability section. It approaches environmental sustainability issues including those of climate change with gender blind language. This poses a serious challenge in regard to monitoring the implementation of its strategies and objectives in terms of their impact on women and other vulnerable groups.

In 2016 the President of Republic of Malawi His Excellency Prof. Peter Mutharika signed the Paris Agreement on Climate Change (COP 2016). The Paris Agreement brings all nations into a common cause to undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects with enhanced support to assist developing countries. The COP has a gender action plan that will ensure the implementation of more than 60 decisions to have a gender specific mandate, therefore connects directly with the aspirations of policies at national level.

At national level, there are Technical Committees such the Climate Change, Climate Adaptation for Rural Livelihoods and Agriculture (CARLA) project and the Environment and Natural Resources Management project which monitor the impacts of development initiatives such as irrigation programs, farmers land management practices and forestry management. There is also a National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) which provides a process for least developed countries to identify priorities, activities that respond to their urgent and immediate needs to adopt to climate change and environmental degradation with priority focus on women.

Challenges

- Malawi's population is growing at a very fast rate and it is estimated that by 2040 the population will have trebled from the current 17 million. Due to this development, people are cultivating every available space and cutting trees for fuel, thereby causing a lot of environmental degradation. The power sector is the hardest hit as Malawi gets almost 99 percent of its electricity from hydro plants that are placed on one river, the Shire Rive. Due to upstream poor land management the hydro plants head ponds are full with sedimentation. The people who suffer most are the women as they have to walk long distances to get water and firewood.
- Lack of technical know-how in gender mainstreaming among most staff within the responsible Ministry is a bottleneck that affects policy formulation, programme implementation, and the depth of gender integration in environmental and social impact assessments. With emerging industries like extractives, the need for sound gender programming within the Ministry has become even more urgent.

SECTION THREE: NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES

32. National Machinery for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

The ministry responsible for gender equality and women empowerment is the national coordinating gender machinery in Malawi. Currently it is in the Ministry of Gender, Children Disability and Social Welfare. The National Gender Machinery is composed of in Malawi the machinery comprises key stakeholders and agencies including government ministries, departments & agencies; civil society organisations; the private sector; development partners and donors it coordinates the country's efforts in achieving gender equality and women empowerment.

33. The Head of the National Machinery

The Secretary for Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare is the head of the national gender machinery. The head of the gender machinery chairs the Gender, Youth and Sports Sector Working Group which coordinates implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The chair sits on inter-ministerial steering committee on SGD.

34. Formal Mechanisms for Different Stakeholders to Participate in the Implementation and Monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The Government of Malawi launched the Sector Working Groups (SWGs) in 2008 as a means of implementing the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) and the Development Assistance Strategy (DAS). The main aims of the SWGs are to provide a forum for negotiation, policy dialogue, and agreement of plans and undertakings among Government, development Partners, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the Private Sector at the sectoral level. Further, the SWGs provide an opportunity for policy harmonization across the sector through Technical Working Groups (TWGs) such as the Gender TWG within the sector. They also provide a mechanism to monitor the achievement of MGDS objectives and other international instruments such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Gender, Children Youth and Sports Sector Working Group (GCY&SSWG), is one of the Sector Working Groups established by the Government to facilitate the planning, coordination, budgeting, implementation and monitoring of development initiatives in order to contribute to the achievement of the MGDS, SDGs among others.

The GCYD&S sector comprises of two key ministries: the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare (MoGCDSW) and the Ministry of Labour, Youth, Sports and Manpower Development; as well as other stakeholders such as government departments, Non-Governmental Organizations, Private Sector and Development Partners. The variety and cross-cutting nature of the issues that have to be dealt with by this sector and the multiplicity of the key stakeholders, makes coordination of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation critical to the sector.

Stakeholders for the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration And Platform For Action And The 2030 Agenda.

In Malawi, Government Ministries, Departments, Agencies, Women's Rights Organisations, NGOs, Academia, Faith Based Organisations, Traditional leaders, Parliamentary Committees, the Private Sector including Banks, UN systems and donors, and local councils participate in the coordination mechanisms to contribute to the implementation of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; the Agenda 2030 and AU Agenda 2063

Mechanisms for the Participation of Women and Girls and other Marginalized Groups

In Malawi, any planning and programming of gender interventions is facilitated in the way that all gender groups participate. This goes beyond marginalized women and girls but also focus on other vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities, persons with albinism, youths and the elderly, among many others.

The decentralized structures at the district council level such as the village development committees and area development committees, youth parliaments are used to ensure that every planning and programming is inclusive.

The Gender Technical Working Groups are also operational at the district council level for the coordination of the gender equality and women empowerment interventions.

Stakeholders Participation in the Preparation of the Present National Report

Various stakeholders were involved in the consultation and validation processes, for the development of the Beijing +25 Review Report. These stakeholders included government Ministries, Departments & Agencies; Women's Rights Organisations, NGOs, Academia, Faith Based Organisations, Traditional Leaders, the National Assembly, Private Sector, UN system, Donors, and Youth representatives, among others. The report was later validated high level stakeholders including principal secretaries, heads of departments, Chief executives and heads of UN system.

35. Inclusion of Gender Equality and the Empowerment Women and Girls in the National Plan/Strategy for SDG Implementation?

Malawi has mainstreamed gender and women empowerment in the MGDS III (2017-2022) which is the development blueprint for the country. The Strategy is aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals.

SECTION FOUR: DATA AND STATISTICS

36. Three areas in which Malawi has made progress when it comes to Gender

Statistics

1. Re-processed existing data

The Government through the National Statistical Office (NSO) has been producing timely and quality gender statistics. For instance, NSO produced the gender analytical report based on the data from Demographic Health Survey (DHS) 2015-16. The gender analytical report provides the trends and differentials of gender related issues in Malawi. Specific results were given on education, literacy and exposure to mass media, marriage and sexual activity, fertility preferences, HIV and Aids knowledge and attitude and behavior experiences of domestic violence.

2. Engaged trained in capacity building

The Government has oriented various officers from different Ministries on how to produce disaggregated information in terms of gender and age among others. In addition, the Child Protection Module, the Women Empowerment Module and the Gender Based Violence Module in the Integrated Management System (IIMS) have all been upgraded. Orientation of all officers from the grassroots level on how to develop tools and collect gender statistics in

Malawi will be conducted in due course. Also, the Government has switched from paper-based data collection tools to computer assisted data collection tools, as demonstrated in the 2018 national population and housing census. This was initiated in order to produce timely and quality information on gender statistics.

3. Improved Administrative-based or alternative data sources to address data gaps

In the past five years, the Government of Malawi through the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social welfare has been working towards improving the availability of administrative data. This has been achieved through initiating a performance-based contract whereby the department of planning and research collects quarterly data from all the departments within the ministry. The information includes the achievements made and indicators satisfied by the departments as per the agreed performance contract; as well as the reform agenda. The Government also introduced a Programme Based Budget (PBB) which is a performance-based budgeting approach that focuses on linking resources and results for agencies by tracing these results to strategic outcomes since 2015. With technical support from the Ministry of Gender, the Government has reviewed indicators for some of the Ministry Department and Agencies' Programme Based Budgets and plans are underway to engender all the Programme Based Budget.

37. Top three priorities for strengthening National Gender Statistics over the next five years

1. Development of a centralised web-based database

In the past years, the Ministry developed a centralized web-based dashboard on gender statistics namely the Gender Based Violence (GBV) IMS and Women Empowerment MIS. These modules are within the Integrated Information Management system that the Government developed in 2015. Although the IIMS is national wide, implementation has been limited to the districts supported by UNFPA and UNDP. To this effect, capacity building for district officers in the targeted districts and other stakeholders has been done to empower them. However, despite the trainings, operationalization of the GBVMIS has been difficult due to systematic technical challenges associated with the module. This has resulted in the districts having a backlog of cases which have not yet been entered into the system.

The Government seeks to address these challenges by among others, upgrading the entire Integrated Information Management System with emphasis on three two key modules namely: GBVMIS and Women Economic Empowerment

2. Conducting New Surveys

Malawi has made tremendous progress in integrating gender into some of the National Surveys including the Demographic and Household Survey - DHS 2015/16 and the 2018 National Census. However, Government has noted that there is little progress towards research and production of national statistics in specific areas including GBV, Disability and Child Protection. Therefore, Government would like to put more effort on conducting studies including Gender Development Index, Disability Survey and Early Childhood Development Survey.

3. Production of Knowledge Products

Government and its stakeholders have made great strides in creating a strong gender related legal and policy framework. In 2017 and 2018, Malawi was commended by both the African Union and the United Nations for developing good gender related laws and fighting child marriages. However, it has been observed that tracking implementation of these policies and laws is still a challenge. Therefore, in the next five years, Government will intensify in the development of Monitoring and Evaluation products to assess and inform stakeholders and the general public on the progress made and areas that need reconsideration.

38. Indicators for Monitoring Progress on the SDGs

The Malawi Government has conducted a baseline survey that has documented baseline values for all the SDGs including Goal 5 that focuses on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. The country has also developed additional indicators that will enable it track progress and these indicators are captured in both the Women Empowerment MIS and the Gender Based Violence MIS. Appendix 1

39. Compilation of SGD Indicators

The Government has just finished collection of baseline values for general SDGs indicators and gender specific ones. Data collection and compilation for gender specific indicators will commence once the Integrated Information Management System has been fully upgraded and operationalized at both national and district levels. The indicators that have been prioritized are the same indicators that are in the Integrated Information Management system and are summarized in appendix 1.

40. Major levels of data disaggregation

The Government is making concerted effort to ensure that most of the indicators in Malawi are disaggregated by geographic location, sex, age, marital status and disability.