



REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

SPEECH

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY

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PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

DURING THE LAUNCH OF

THE OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIPS

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR MALAWI

BINGU INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE, LILONGWE

TUESDAY, 6TH JUNE 2023

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last week Monday, the front page headline in one of the dailies read: “Reforms Report Gathers Dust”. The accompanying article went on to claim that governance analysts say that the President is not committed to the reforms agenda. Today, we are here as a direct result of months of work that my office has been doing quietly to advance my Administration’s reforms agenda, months of work that our newspapers seem to have not been paying attention to. I think it’s high time that newspapers understood that just because they have not been paying attention or privy to something happening in Government doesn’t mean that it isn’t happening.

The Reforms Report that I ordered and that was submitted to me by the Honourable Vice President was not a document for public entertainment or public debates that produce nothing but noise. It was a reference document for me as President to use in my own direct engagements with public institutions and public officers that need my constant direction on the reforms they need to implement in their respective

areas of responsibility, something I have been doing for two years now.

If I had not been pursuing Reforms, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs would not have made progress in the negotiations for an Extended Credit Facility with the International Monetary Fund, because the center piece of those negotiations are the Reforms we have put in place for better fiscal management. If I had not been pursuing Reforms, we would not have secured the 350 million dollar Millennium Challenge Compact, because to qualify for that Compact required the implementation of Reforms that passed the scorecard our development partners gave us. If I had not been pursuing Reforms, the Presidential Delivery Unit in my office would not have been conducting Delivery Labs for various sectors to improve public sector performance. In fact, to sustain the momentum of the PDU, I have appointed Dr. Janet Banda, the Deputy Secretary to the President and Cabinet, as the new Head of PDU, who will be reporting directly to me on its operations and its push for public sector reforms and delivery.

Lastly, if I had not been pursuing Reforms, we would not be here today, launching the National Action Plan for reactivating Malawi's membership in the Open Government Partnerships, which my office has been pursuing since the time I directed the Secretary to the President and Cabinet to pursue it in July last year when I opened the National Anti-Corruption Conference. Five months after that directive, a new National Action Plan was submitted to the global OGP Secretariat, whose representatives are here today, resulting in the reactivation of Malawi's membership.

This OGP membership means that the action plan Malawi is pursuing for reforms that enhance governance and accountability is so robust that it meets the standards and has the buy-in of global partners, civil society, private sector, non-governmental organizations, academia, and other stakeholders. This OGP membership gives us access to international tools and standards for promoting transparency and citizenship engagement and participation. This OGP membership gives us areas of focus that are critical to the pursuit of

Malawi 2063's Enabler Number 2, which deals with Effective Governance Systems and Institutions. This OGP membership signals our commitment to practice the provisions of our Constitution, which demand that those who govern must do so with transparency and accountability to sustain the trust of citizens.

In fact, those in our country who are paying close attention to what we are doing to implement reforms know that this OGP membership is part of a larger ecosystem of reforms. That ecosystem has already registered so many milestones during the three years that I have been in office. For instance, the promulgation of the Companies (Beneficial Ownership) Regulations, 2022 is part of that reforms ecosystem. The enactment of the Access to Information law is part of that reforms ecosystem. The enactment of the Mines and Minerals Act, 2023 is part of that reforms ecosystem. And even the National Digitalization Policy that we are on the verge of adopting and operationalizing is part of that reforms ecosystem. And there are many other milestones that have been registered and more to come, all of which are being pursued because of our

resolve to open up Government to the people who entrusted us to run it on their behalf and in their interests. And for me personally, doing so is consistent with the principle of servant leadership that is enshrined in the first pillar of my SUPER Hi-5 agenda, because I believe that to be the kind of government Malawians deserve.

And it is not just in the Executive Branch of Government where we are pursuing the implementation of reforms. Six days from now, the Chief Justice as Head of the Judiciary, the Speaker as Head of the Legislature, and I as Head of the Executive will co-host the first ever National Conference on the Separation of Powers, because we all realize that the reforms agenda needs to be pursued across the board to ensure that all those who hold fiduciary positions in any branch or agency of Government conduct themselves with accountability and transparency. Even though each branch of Government is independent, there is no branch or institution of Government whose independence is a license for those who lead it to operate without accountability to the people of Malawi or to other

branches that are mandated by law to provide checks and balances.

My expectation, therefore, of all public institutions is that they will take this OGP membership seriously and get on board, because our pursuit of the reforms agenda is moving forward and we will not retreat. If you do not believe me, those of you in the media can look at the countries around us and you will find that Malawi is only the second country in the SADC Region to have an action plan for reforms and accountability that qualifies for OGP membership. That means that no matter what negative headlines the local papers choose to print on the state of reforms in Malawi, the reality is that when it comes to commitment to good Governance, Malawi is a leader in the region, not a follower. In fact, my end goal is to see Malawi eventually become a Global Center of Excellence in Good Governance, and this OGP membership means we are on the right track.

Let me therefore conclude by expressing my appreciation to our international partners who have made available financial and technical assistance to

make the implementation of the National Action Plan during the next two years possible. I want to especially thank the Chandler Foundation in this regard, which also supported my office with the wherewithal to host the Anti-Corruption Conference last year. But I know there are others and I give you all my thanks for working tirelessly behind the scenes with the OGP Secretariat in Malaŵi to ensure the smooth take off and implementation of the National Action Plan.

With these remarks, I declare the National Action Plan for Open Government Partnerships in Malaŵi officially launched.

Thank you for your attention, and God bless you.