

**REPORT ON**  
**INCEPTION WORKSHOP ON SUSTAINABLE MOUNTAIN**  
**DEVELOPMENT IN MALAWI**



**HELD AT**

**LAND RESOURCES CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT CONFERENCE ROOM**

**SEPTEMBER 2017**

## **1.0 Context and Background**

The terrain of Malawi is breathtaking comprising of plateaus, plains, hills and mountains. Mulanje Mountain, home to rare Mulanje Cedar, is the highest Mountain in Central Africa with the highest point, Sapitwa Peak rising to 3050 meters above sea level. Other key mountain areas in Malawi include the Livingstonia Mountains, Misuku Hills and Mphompha Mountains. These Fragile mountain catchment ecosystems are considered sensitive areas in the Environmental Management Act. They are major water catchment areas with indigenous forests, commercial forests used for recreation, nature conservation, agriculture and other communal land uses. Some of the mountain areas in Malawi have a cultural significance which reflects the identity of the country. Most of these areas are threatened and require urgent action to save them from further degradation.

While there have been efforts to address the threat to mountain ecosystems, these initiatives have mostly been sectoral, disjointed and often isolated. Despite these efforts, degradation of mountain ecosystems has continued on an unprecedented rate. The of lack projects, programmes and networks focusing on mountain biodiversity preservation poses difficulties in coming up with a common vision for the management of the resource among different players.

In an effort to address the threats to Mountains in Malawi, an inception workshop on sustainable Mountain Development was jointly organized by the Land Resources Conservation Department and the Environmental Affairs Department on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2017. Participants to the workshop included representatives from government departments that work in Mountain areas, representatives of local and international NGOs, members of civil society groups and representatives from the academia (Annex .....List of participants)

## **2.0 Workshop Objectives**

- Raise awareness on the impacts of climate change on mountain biodiversity and communities

- Highlight challenges as well as the opportunities of Sustainable mountain Development in Malawi
- Identify strategies for adaptation for the different sectors (agriculture, health, mining, urban water supply, industry)
- Develop a roadmap for the development of a National Strategy on SMD
- Identify the national priorities and needs related to Sustainable mountain development in Malawi
- Formation of a national committee on Mountains
- Discuss the need for funding and the possibility for Joint Proposal development among partners.
- Discuss the commemoration of the International Day of Mountains



### **3.0 Workshop Presentations**

During the workshop a number of presentations were made by key stakeholders. The presentation was made to raise awareness on SMD to participants and also to get an overview of some of the current initiatives focusing on Mountain Diversity in Malawi. The following is summary of the presentations that were made;

#### ***3.1 Presentation 1***

**“Why Mountain Matter? Putting Mountains on the Sustainable Development Agenda”  
Macpherson Nthara, Focal Person Mountain Partnership.**

The presentation gave an overview in percentages of the value of Mountains and their contributions. For example Mulanje Mountain being a catchment area for 9 perennial rivers. The following threats to mountains were also highlighted, deforestation, population growth, industrialization and impacts of Climate change. The presentation also touched on challenges to Mountains including inaccessibility: lack of roads, infrastructures and markets, Soils features: slope, steepness, shallowness, elevation, lack of micronutrients and marginalization either geographically, economically and politically. The paper introduced the Mountain Partnership and its activities, key barriers to SMD in Malawi and the justification for SMD strategy. Lastly the paper touched on the link between mountains and SDGs.

### ***3.2 Presentation 2***

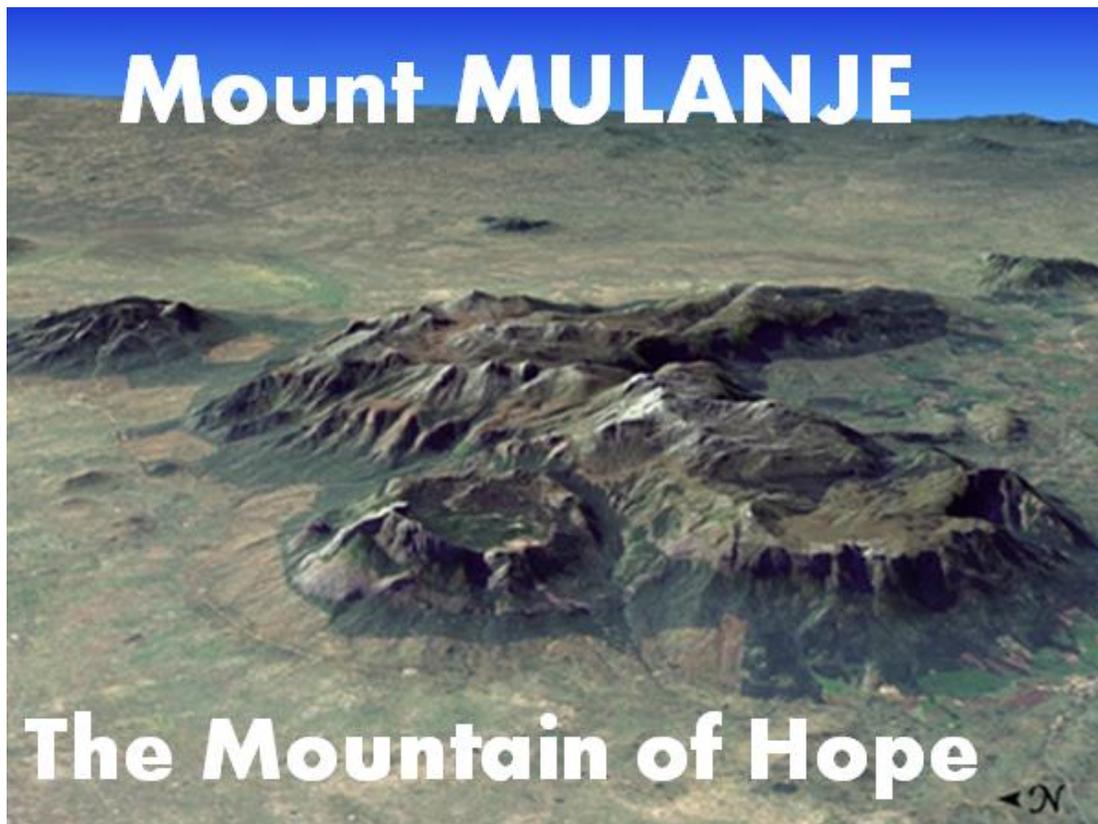
**“Mountain Biodiversity and Why it Matters; Initiatives by the Environmental Affairs Department”, by Mphatso Kalemba, Principal Environmental Officer.**

The paper focused on the current efforts by the environmental Affairs Department (EAD) especially with regard to the preservation of Mountain Biodiversity. The paper touched on a number of issues with Mountain Diversity in Malawi. It was observed that not many natural habitats for Biodiversity are found outside of protected areas. She noted that the status of biodiversity conservation is poor especially in the southern Malawi. It was reported that there is illegal access of genetic resources without benefit sharing arrangements. Some of the activities of EAD highlighted were promoting access to, and sharing of benefits from the utilisation of genetic resources related to mountain biodiversity in accordance with national legislation, strengthening the capacity of local communities to engage in Access and Benefits Sharing (ABS) agreements, identifying and conserving genetic resources of high economic value for ABS and taking an inventory of traditional knowledge innovations and practices around mountains. The EAD is also assisting communities around mountains to develop community protocols for ensuring access to genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge for ABS.

### ***3.3 Presentation 3***

**“Mulanje Mountain, The Mountain of Hope; Experiences of Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust” By Moffat Kayembe, Programme Officer, Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust (MMCT).**

The presentation started with highlighting the significance of Mulanje Mountain which among others is a source of nine big perennial rivers, it has rich, biodiversity endowment, it is a key tourist destination center and an income generator for surrounding communities. However a number of threats facing Mulanje Mountain were also mentioned and these are illegal logging, forest fires, encroachment and the proliferation of invasive alien species



***Cover page of MMCT Presentation***

The presenter noted that although some ecological threats are coming as a result of climate change, most of these threats are emanating from the social aspects i.e. the people. A number of root causes include high demand vs low supply of resources, breakdown of systems and procedures, very low commitment to change, gross misunderstanding of democracy and human rights and corrupt practices between and among stakeholders.

A number of strategies of MMCT were presented and these focus on fire management, law enforcement, invasive alien species, ecological monitoring, infrastructure development, habitat management, research, and livelihood enhancement.

#### 4.0 Plenary Discussion

- a. Members noted that the debate regarding SMD is relatively new in the country as such there is need to define "Mountains" in the Malawi context to avoid confusion.
- b. It was also noted that currently there are efforts to sustain ecosystem services from such places like mountains though these efforts are dis jointed and lack common vision. The formation of a national Committee on Mountains should not undermine the current authorities but rather strengthen them. These include government departments like Forestry, environmental affairs, and National parks. However members agreed that a National committee on mountains would be a point of convergence for different authorities so that they can have a common voice and seek synergies. The committee will also help the different authority to avoid duplication of efforts.
- c. Members recognized the existence of Mountain communities in Malawi. It was observed that these communities are contributing to the destructions of the ecosystems since their population is also increasing. An example was given of the Chowe Community which inhabit the central part of Zomba Mountain. Members agreed that depending on the sensitivity of certain mountains, it's important that through a national strategy, settlement and cultivation in some mountains should not be allowed. There should be a clear direction of what may be allowed and nit allowed.
- d. Members agreed that due to the complex nature of issues in the mountains, there is need for a holistic approach so that the concerns of different interest groups are addressed. The proposed SMD strategy has to balance the interest and concerns of all parties involved.
- e. Members agreed that the SMD has to consider how land tenure issues influence the conservation efforts.
- f. There is need to learn from current approaches in the protection of trees. Member noted that the conservation of trees is now more on farm than off farm.
- g. Members noted with concern that as a country, we are known to come up with good policies and strategies but their implementation leaves a lot to be desired. The proposed SMD strategy should have practical interventions that can be implemented in the ground.

- h. Members agree that there is need for more awareness raising on SMD so that government department can institutionalize SMD and allocate resources towards it.
- i. Members noted that there is little mention of Mountain Ecosystems in current policies. Mountains have either been ignored or subsumed in other sectoral policies. It was recommended that through the strategy, CSOs should be involved in policy review to identify what exist, the current gaps and how to mainstream SMD in the existing policies. Members agreed that coming up with a stand-alone policy may not be possible due to the cross cutting nature of the issue. However it was unanimously agreed that threats to mountains call for immediate policy reforms and action to protect social and ecological systems in Mountains.
- j. Members agreed that it's important that upstream and downstream interactions are explored in SMD (for people to appreciate).
- k. Members agreed that the media should be part of the process of developing a strategy so that they can help in publicity.

## **5.0 Research and Development in Mountain**

**5.1** Members recognized the importance of research in coming up with evidence base for decision making. Members agreed on the need to strengthen adaptive /collaborative research combining traditional practices and scientific knowledge.

**5.2** A number of areas for possible research were brainstormed including;

- Understanding the perceptions of communities on mountain ecosystems;
- Institutional settings and power relations in mountain management. From Legal Policies to community instruments. Explore linkages to the existing institutions from the FORUM to the other, etc.
- Characterization of mountain ecosystems in Malawi. Define a mountain in Malawi e.t.c.
- Economics and social trade-offs (provision, regulatory, ecosystems, cultural or religious) in mountain ecosystems management; ( sustainable utilization against destruction).
- Potential approaches to management of mountain ecosystems in Malawi;

- The nexus of climate change (adaptation and mitigation), disaster risk management DRM and mountain development in Malawi.

## **6.0 National Committee on Mountains**

**6.1** The meeting resolved to reconstitute the National Committee on Mountains. Member agreed on the composition of the National Committee on Mountains. It was agreed that there must be representation from the following key stakeholders both from government and NGO

1. Department of Environmental Affairs (EAD)
2. Department of Land Resources Conservation (LRCD)
3. Department of Irrigation and water Development
4. Department of Forestry
5. Department of National Parks and Wildlife
6. Department of Mining
7. Department of Tourism
8. Department of Geological Surveys
9. Department of Energy Affairs
10. Department of Disaster Risk Management
11. Department of Agriculture Research
12. Department of Trade and Industry
13. Blantyre Water Board (BWB)
14. Total land Care (TLC)
15. United Purpose (UP)
16. Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust (MMCT)
17. Forestry Research Institute of Malawi (FRIM)
18. Civil Society Agriculture Network (CISANET)
19. Zodiac Radio
20. Institute for Sustainable Development (ISD)
21. Heal Trust
22. Lilongwe University for Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR)

**6.2** The following TORs for the committee were brainstormed;

- (a) To strengthen multi stakeholder engagement on SMD
- (b) To act as a platform for information exchange among network members
- (c) Through the network to advocate for policy and policy support on SMD
- (d) Promote capacity building on SMD among stakeholders
- (e) To recognize, support and strengthen mountain communities as well as their traditional knowledge systems.
- (f) Organize national and local events around SMD
- (g) Facilitate development of joint proposals on SMD

**6.3** It was agreed that the National Committee will be made up of Technocrats and will be headed by the Director of Land Resources Conservation Department which will also host the Secretariat.

**6.4** It was agreed that the National Committee on Mountains will report to Steering Committee on Mountains that will be composed of Directors of Key Departments and Chief Executive of NGOs.

**6.5** The Steering Committee will be headed by the Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment, Energy and Mining. (Director advise will be sought on this)

## **7.0 Road Map for National Strategy on Sustainable Mountain Development**

**7.1** Members agreed on the need to come up with a National Strategy on SMD. Some members wanted to have a clear justification for coming up with a strategy on SMD. A response was given as follows;

- (a) The need for joint vision for the country mountains
- (b) There is need for a platform that will bring different stakeholders working in mountains to share information and ideas
- (c) There are some mountains that have not been given attention in the National discussions on Mountains because either they are considered as not significant or there is not much data about them. The SMD would highlight the often ignored Mountains and highland (including communities therein).
- (d) The SMD strategy would help in the zoning of Mountains so that essential ecosystems services can be maintained based on their significance

(e) SMD would help in coming up with priorities for further action i.e. in areas where much is already known, it would recommend practical actions and where information is lacking, it would recommend research.

**7.2** Members were informed that, if developed, Malawi will follow in the steps of Madagascar and Uganda. Members were informed of the support pledged by ARCOS amounting to 5000USD for the development of the strategy. However members felt that 5000USD may not be enough to hire a Consultant but rather a multi sectoral team should be constituted that will share responsibilities and can start the process. It was agreed the Drafting Team should seek Co Sponsorship for the process.

**7.3** It was noted that there is need to come up with a work plan and detailed budget towards the development of the national strategy. Some of the activities proposed included;

- a) Planning meeting of the core team of SMD strategy
- b) Identification of core sectoral issues to be addressed by Strategy
- c) Development of a SMD strategy Template by Core Team
- d) To assign portions/sections of the Strategy to core-team members for development
- e) Development of sectoral plans and submission to core team
- f) Literature desk review - review of current and previous Projects targeting Mountains
- g) Development of field data collection tools e.g. Household field interviews, Focus Group discussions, Key informant Interviews
- h) Field Visit to different regions of the country (Key Mountains) and discussions with partners and Mountain Communities
- i) Consolidation of sectoral plans by core team
- j) Compilation of Draft SMD Strategy by Lead Writer
- k) Presentation of preliminary draft at a national workshop

## **8.0 Commemoration of the International Mountains Day (IMD), 11<sup>th</sup> December 2017)**

Members were informed of the IMD; The Focal Person MP explained that the IMD is observed every year to create awareness about the importance of mountains to life, to highlight the

opportunities and constraints in mountain development and to build alliances that will bring positive change to mountain peoples and environments around the world. **“Mountains under Pressure: climate, hunger, migration”** is the theme chosen for this year’s celebration. It was then proposed that this year, Malawi should take part in activities marking the IMD. Members agreed that a task force should be formed to strategize on the commemoration this year.

A concept note and a budget should be developed that can be shared with possible partners.

## **Annexe 1**

### **LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AND CONTACT DETAILS**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Phone No</b>
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Months	October 017				November 017				DECEMBER 2017				Cost USD
	Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4	Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4	Mk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4	
<b>Activity</b>													
1.0 Core team planning meeting - All team members review	■	■											250
2.0 Identification of core sectoral issues to be addressed by Strategy		■	■										-
3.0 Development of a SMD strategy Template by Core Team			■	■									-
4.0 Allocation of responsibility and development of particular portions of the plan based on an agreed template to core team members.				■									-
5.0 Field Visit of Key different regions of the country (Mountains) and discussions with Mountain Communities (pictures, videos and meetings)					■	■							2000
6.0 Feed-back presentations on developed portions of the plan by core-team members						■							250
7.0 Consolidation of sectoral plans by core team							■	■					1000
8.0 Presentation of the draft plan to the core-team by the Lead Writer									■				1000
9.0 Finalize the Plan Lead Writer									■				500
10.0 Presentation of preliminary draft at a Validation workshop										■			

