



THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

KEYNOTE ADDRESS DELIVERED

BY THE

HONOURABLE MINISTER OF HEALTH, DR JEAN A.N KALILANI, MP

AT

THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON NUTRITION

ROME, ITALY.

20TH NOVEMBER 2014.

**The Chairperson
Your Excellences,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am extremely delighted and profoundly honoured to be here in this conference to deliver a statement on behalf of the Government and people of Malawi on the state of nutrition in Malawi and our considered view of the policy direction; nationally, regionally and internationally for improving conditions of nutrition going forward

To begin with, let me convey our warm regards and sincere greetings from the Government and People of Malawi, fondly known as “the Warm Heart of Africa” solely because of the warmth of both its climate and the people.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Malawi has registered remarkable success in meeting some of the Millennium Development Goals including Goal number 1 of Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger. In particular, within the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger target, Malawi has made considerable progress in reducing undernourishment from 44.7% in 1990-92, to 21.8% in 2012-14 as reported in the

joint IFAD, FAO and WFP State of Food Insecurity 2013 launched 2 weeks ago; and also reduced stunting for children under 5 from 47.1 in 2010 to 42.4% in 2013 as demonstrated in the results of the MDG Endline Survey carried out in Malawi in 2013, whose results were announced 10 days ago.

Despite these aforementioned successes, Malnutrition remains an issue in Malawi. Based on the recent Demographic Health Surveys of 2004 and 2010, underweight was estimated at 17% and 13% respectively and wasting was estimated at 6% and 4% respectively and stunting at 42.4%(2013). These figures indicate that malnutrition indicators are still high in Malawi.

Similarly, micronutrient disorders, especially Vitamin A and Iron deficiencies are also of public health concern in Malawi. According to the Micronutrient survey of 2001 and 2009, Vitamin A in under five children was estimated at 22.9% in 2009 down from 59.4% in 2001 while iron deficiency was estimated at 55% in 2009 Compared to 79.7% in 2001. Malawi indicators are far below the globally accepted levels.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The successes Malawi has registered in nutrition improvements in the recent past has come about due to a multiplicity of factors bordering on policy formulation, intervention implementation and building partnerships in program implementation. In the area of policy formulation, Malawi has elevated the issue of Nutrition high in its policy agenda by including it in the overarching policy agenda of the Malawi Development Growth Strategy II (MGDSII,2011-2016) making it one of Government's top priority areas for investments. Furthermore, Malawi has also developed the first ever National Nutrition Policy that integrates Health, Agriculture, Education, Gender and rural development issues related to nutrition improvements.

In addition, Malawi is also developing the National Nutrition Strategic Plan which is aimed at clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of various players in the nutrition sector, and set targets and budgets for different interventions and programs to be implemented to improve nutrition conditions of the people of Malawi. Other strategic documents Malawi has worked on are the National Micronutrient Strategy and the Nutrition Education and Communication Strategy. These are intended to enhance multi-stakeholder and multisectoral responses to reducing stunting and other forms of nutrition disorders as it is

expected to facilitate broader response and action by mobilizing and building a strong movement and commitment towards Nutrition improvement among a range of duty bearers.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Aside from the policy arena, Malawi is also actively implementing a number of measures and programs aimed at improving nutrition outcomes in Malawi. These measures include:

- The establishment of early warning systems for food insecurity;
- Implementing the Agriculture Subsidy Program;
- Diversification of crops and use of early maturing crops;
- Setting up community seed/grain banks and storage facilities;
- Implementing the Farm Income Diversified Programs (FIDP);
- Income generating activities such as creation of Village Savings and loans associations; aimed at reducing market and environmental shocks thereby improving overall food security, availability and utilization at community levels;
- Promoting consumption of micronutrient rich foods (dietary diversification);

- Promotion of bio-fortification; Fortification of centrally processed food (sugar; cooking oil; wheat and maize flour; Corn Soya Blend (likuni phala); salt) and
- Vitamin A Supplementation through routine services and biannual child health campaigns.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Government is implementing these programs and interventions in collaboration with other Development Partners, Civil Society Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, Faith Based Organizations, the Academia, Private Sector, the Media and the Youth.

I must indicate though that challenges persist and these include:

- inadequate financial; technical; and human resources to support national programmes;
- Inadequate community/frontline workers and capacity at community level to track and follow up caregivers at community level ; and
- Low community and male participation in the national nutrition response.

In conclusion, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to emphasize that the Malawi nutrition response is still at an infant stage and requires a lot of support technically and financially to achieve all the Millennium Development Goals. The Government of Malawi remains committed to champion the national nutrition response in a holistic manner and is appealing to the Global Community, Bilateral, Multilateral and Civil Society Partners to continue supporting Malawi adequately deal with its challenges in order to accelerate the achievement of its nutrition targets.

I thank you all for your kind attention.