



REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY PROF. ARTHUR
PETER MUTHARIKA, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
MALAWI**

**AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEBATE OF THE 71st
SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

**“THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: A UNIVERSAL
PUSH TO TRANSFORM OUR WORLD”**

NEW YORK, 20TH SEPTEMBER, 2016

- Your Excellency, the President of the General Assembly;
- Your Excellency, the Secretary General of the United Nations;
- Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government;
- Distinguished Delegates;
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is with absolute delight and joy that I stand to address this august Assembly.

Let me join my fellow leaders in congratulating you, Mr. President, for being elected President of this Assembly. The world has shown its confidence in you; and we are confident that you will steer the ship to the next shore of our dreams. Your election also testifies our belief in the equality of states irrespective of sizes of the member states.

Let me also most sincerely commend Your Excellency, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for your exceptional leadership during your tenure of office. We wish you every success in your future endeavors.

I believe we will find an equally competent person to replace you. I have also noted with appreciation that the process of electing the Secretary General has, for the first time in the history of the UN, begun to address issues of transparency and democracy. If we promote political virtues of transparency and democracy in the world, we must indeed be the first to be transparent and democratic.

Mr. President,

We have engaged in a unanimous drive to transform our world. We have agreed that our road to a better world must follow the signposts of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals show our road to the end of poverty in the world.

Today, we gather to look back at the road of progress and to renew our commitment to pursue the goals to the end.

Mr. President,

The mission of every generation should be to leave our world a better place for next generations. For us, our mission is faced with mountains of challenges.

Our world stands in great peril. Innocent souls continue suffering in the tragedy of wars. Many lives are maimed, mutilated and curtailed. Political instability continues to shake foundations of our dreams.

Conflicts have dispersed communities from their homes and sent them into endless migration. We are caught in endless cycles of suffering violence, terrorism, radicalization, extremism, abductions and human trafficking. This is a story we cannot tell the next generations with any pride. Our world is living a story of indignity!

Our planet lives in great danger. Everywhere, global warming threatens our existence with hurricanes, cyclones, earthquakes, wildfires, extreme flooding and droughts. These dangers threaten fragile economies of Africa and the Third World everywhere.

Africa, and the rest of the developing world, is suffering from dehumanizing poverty; the pain of hunger; insufferable diseases; disgraceful inequalities; and unjustifiable gender imbalances.

Most of these are tragedies and challenges of our own creation. And the solutions lie in our hands. The choices for human destiny, world over, lie with us in this Assembly. These challenges must be resolved by us, or nobody else. It must be here, or nowhere else! It must be now, or never!

Mr. President,

We have risen to the occasion of our times and begun the journey of conquest with our adoption of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). But we have only begun. The sustainability of our pursuit and the conquest of our goals depend on our common understanding and walking together as a community of mankind.

Malawi will do its part, and we are doing our part. We continue to guarantee basic human rights because we can only walk to progress with people who are free.

We offer every care to our brothers and sisters who seek refuge in Malawi because we have a duty to humanity.

We ensure peace, stability, security and tranquility for everyone because we must create an environment for progress.

We govern with the principles of democracy and the rule of law because humanity is only safe when everybody is accountable to someone else.

And we pledge to continue living in peace with all of our neighbors because we value peace and harmony.

Mr. President

Malawi's commitment to international peace and security is on record. We have been sending peacekeeping forces to various parts of Africa and beyond for a long time.

I am happy to report that Malawi's record in peacekeeping is illustrative and outstanding. In this cause, we are committed to the work of the United Nations. As a beacon of peace, we also actively pursue the 2063 AU Agenda to "Silence the Guns by 2020." And silence the guns, we must!

On the economic front, Mr. President, Malawi continues to register steady but considerable progress, albeit the attendant challenges. The country registered a GDP growth rate of 3.2% in 2015 compared to the global average of 3% and is expected to accelerate to 5% in 2016.

Although inflation has been negatively affected by the food shortage, bulk maize importation should help to reduce inflation and consequently improve lending rates. Our domestic and foreign debts are within sustainable levels. And the economy is progressively generating jobs, most needed by the youths, in particular.

Moving forward, a combination of robust fiscal and macroeconomic reform programs which the country is implementing is projected to lead to further growth rates in GDP, single digit inflation and low lending rates which will lead to increased confidence, higher investment, more job creation and improved incomes.

Our only major setback in the last two years was the effects of climate change. In 2015, we experienced the worst forms of floods which affected over half of the country. In 2016 the opposite happened and drought scorched half of the country again. This problem has brought us hunger as we could not produce enough food for two consecutive years.

As I stand here, 6.5 million people will this year require food assistance. My Government is doing all it can to provide for these people. However, we need and seek the external support of our cooperating partners and multilateral institutions within and outside the UN system. We still need US\$246 million for this cause.

Mr. President

When we speak of addressing the climate change problem, let us remember that there are real souls suffering the effects out there. We, as a country will do our duty to humanity. We will sign the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, here at the UN Headquarters and commit my Government towards ratification and domestication of this crucial agreement.

Malawi has already adopted a Climate Change Policy which shall guide domestic implementation of the Paris Agreement. We are moving on our climate action!

Mr. President,

Let me also put it on record that Malawi is making exemplary progress in the health sector. We are pioneering innovative approaches to the management of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. We are among the few countries on the African continent that have successfully rolled out the "Test and Treat" program. We are managing the pandemic. But my appeal is that we need concerted efforts to manage non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as hypertension, diabetes and cancer.

On gender equality, Mr. President, Malawi is taking proactive measures to eliminate the vulnerability of women and adolescent girls to violence and abuse. We are, consequently, focusing on balancing reproductive and productive roles in order to enhance women's participation, in decision-making, and are also focused on addressing gender-based violence.

This work entails collaboration with traditional leaders, in order to tackle retrogressive traditional practices that harm our women and the girl child. We have also enhanced legal and policy reforms and improved on law enforcement in this area. We have adopted the 2016/2020 Gender Equality Implementation Plan as well as strengthened gender-sensitive data collection approaches.

On trade, investments and market access, Mr. President, Malawi continues to open up the economy and offer numerous investment opportunities. We have opened up to investors in mining, manufacturing, agriculture and value addition, tourism, transport, water, energy and financial sectors. We are rapidly improving our business climate.

We are ready to do business with the world. I therefore invite the global community to patronize Malawi's Annual Investors' Conference to be held in Lilongwe on 10th and 11th October, 2016.

Mr. President, it is imperative that regional and global markets should be free of distortions such as subsidies, tariffs and non-tariff barriers. We must live up to the aspirations of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Doha Development Agenda.

The global community must realize that it is only by taking such steps that African countries will be able to produce and add value to their commodities. This will generate the necessary jobs to retain the youths in the continent and propel our economies to sustainable growth and prosperity.

Without investments in these areas, it will continue to be a challenge to stop the youths from the African continent to take upon themselves desperate and dangerous options to cross the oceans and seas to developed economies. Such investments will also reduce the risk of our youth being lured into radicalism and extremism, with the attendant threat to domestic and international peace and security. I must underline that poverty in African communities is a danger to the global community because poverty and the disenchantment of the Youths can be an easy source of radicalization.

Mr. President,

Speaking in my capacity as UN Youth Champion, I am more than committed to the promotion of youth development and harnessing the demographic dividend in Malawi, across the African Continent and beyond.

I am delighted to report that the African Union has adopted the Demographic Dividend as the African Union (AU) Theme for the Year 2017. I wish therefore, to call upon the global leaders to join the efforts of the African Union and indeed our global partners, in prioritizing investments in the youth in order to accelerate socio-economic transformation and development at the global level.

On UN reforms, Mr. President, our common position as Africa is the one espoused as the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration. Our firm belief is that the attainment of the SDGs cannot happen in an environment which is devoid of representation, fairness, efficiency, transparency and accountability at the United Nations Security Council. My country therefore earnestly supports the efforts and work currently under way to find a suitable formula for that reform and revitalization of the UN, and shall seek every possible way to contribute to the appropriate solution on the matter.

Mr. President, let me conclude by reiterating that Malawi is making every effort to overcome decades of underdevelopment, disease and hunger that have retarded the development of the country. This is our quest for the dignity of our people and their place in the world.

Malawi is set to be a productive partner in our collective push to transform our world. We are the leaders of that transformation. We are the generation that must transform the world. History demands our collective leadership.

I thank you for your kind attention.