

PRESS RELEASE

UN MALAWI CELEBRATES 60 YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP AND PROGRESS: BUILDING A BRIGHTER FUTURE TOGETHER

24 October 2024, Lilongwe – The United Nations today celebrates 60 years of partnership with the Government and people of Malawi, reflecting on a journey of shared commitment to sustainable development, peace, and prosperity. Since joining the UN in 1964, just months after independence, Malawi has worked closely with the UN to address critical national challenges, in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the other global commitments before the SDGs. This enduring partnership has contributed to improvements in health, education, governance, food security, and climate resilience.

Over the past six decades, the UN has supported Malawi in tackling some of its most pressing issues, including poverty, food insecurity, and public health challenges. In 2023 alone, Malawi faced a 131 percent increase in acute food insecurity, the UN provided food assistance to 2.5 million people, helping to alleviate hunger and suffering. At the same time, Malawi achieved over 90 percent routine immunization coverage for children under one year, reduced by more than 70% new HIV infections, from 2010 to 2023, and substantially increased coverage of HIV treatment to over 90% of people living with HIV, ensuring the future health and well-being of its youngest citizens.

Through UN support, Malawi has been able to provide digital legal identity to 12.5 million people 16+years and it is the first country in Sub Saharan African to achieve SDG 16 target 9 providing legal identity to all. By providing millions with formal identification, this system enhances access to medical and social services, improves economic opportunities, and fosters social inclusion for all citizens. The UN has also contributed to strengthening learning in Malawi, particularly at foundational level, with nearly 90 per cent of primary school aged children enrolled in school.

Reflecting on the UN's long-standing partnership with Malawi, UN Resident Coordinator Rebecca Adda-Dontoh stated: *"For 60 years, the United Nations has stood alongside Malawi in its pursuit of economic transformation, sustainable development, resilience, sustaining peace and communities and progress. From responding to natural disasters to promoting public health, education, and a national peace architecture, our partnership has been instrumental in addressing challenges and seizing opportunities. As we look to the future, we remain steadfast in our commitment to support Malawi in building a more inclusive, sustainable, and prosperous society."*

"As we celebrate this milestone, we recognize that the future of Malawi lies in the hands of its people, especially the youth. Today's youth are not just the beneficiaries of development, but the drivers of change. As climate change continues to pose significant risks to the nation's agriculture, livelihoods, and communities, the role of young people in climate action has never been more critical."

Under the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for 2024-2028, young people are central to our agenda. The framework emphasizes strategic pillars aimed at promoting sustainable, diversified, and inclusive growth; strengthening institutional governance; ensuring sustainable investments in human capital development; and adapting to climate change, reversing environmental degradation, and supporting energy transformation.

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The UN calls on Malawi's youth to take a leading role in building a more resilient and prosperous future. Whether through innovation in green technologies, entrepreneurship, peacebuilding or community-led climate initiatives, young people have the power to transform their communities and the nation at large. By embracing sustainable practices and promoting inclusive development, the youth can help ensure that no one is left behind in Malawi's journey towards prosperity.

Together, with the energy and dedication of Malawi's youth, and in partnership with the Government, civil society, academia, the media, development partners and the private sector, the UN stands ready to step up its support in addressing the challenges ahead. We must unite our efforts to ensure a better, more sustainable future for all people in Malawi.

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