

MALAWI HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION



**SPEECH BY SCADER LOUIS, CHAIRPERSON OF THE MALAWI
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION,**

**DELIVERED ON THE COMMEMORATION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AT
MASINTHA GROUND, LILONGWE DISTRICT**

ON

SATURDAY, 3RD DECEMBER, 2022

Salutations

- Your Excellency Dr. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera State President of the Republic of Malawi,
- The Minister of Gender Community Development and Social Welfare, Honourable Dr Patricia Kaliati
- Ms. Collen Zamba, Secretary to the President and Cabinet,
- Mrs. Roselyn Makhumula, Secretary for Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare,
- Ms. Maria Do Valle Ribeiro, UN Resident Coordinator,
- Mr. Mapopa Shaba, Chairperson of FEDOMA Executive Council,
- Mr. Simon Munde, Acting Executive Director, FEDOMA
- Honorable Ulemu Msungama, Member of Parliament for Lilongwe City South East Constituency,
- Councilor Samson Chaziya, Chairperson of Lilongwe District Council,
- All Protocols observed,
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

Your Excellency, I feel greatly honored and privileged to join you this morning on this special day as we commemorate the International Day for Persons with Disabilities. The Commission is particularly encouraged to see such a huge turnout participating in the activities relating to persons with disabilities. This is an indication that as a nation, we are all aware that standing in defense of the rights of persons with disabilities is a duty of every individual, every organization, every government department.

Your Excellency, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the Commission is encouraged by determination shown by persons with disabilities themselves who have over the years, overcome significant obstacles in their daily lives. They have shown strength and courage in confronting health and physical challenges they face on a daily basis. They have shown strength and courage in defying cultural myths and practices and come out stronger. They have shown courage and strength by rising above stigmatization and unfair stereotypes which

society has knowingly and sometimes unknowingly labeled against them.

Your Excellency, the International Day for Persons with Disabilities is and has been a resounding success globally and continues to hold enormous potential in furthering public education on condition and raising awareness on persons with disabilities and their human rights. There has also been unprecedented growth in civil society groups representing persons with disabilities. The International Day for Persons with Disabilities should remind us all that persons with disabilities are entitled to civil, political, economic and cultural rights recognized in international human rights instruments. As a country, For example, we have specific duties grounded in international human rights law notably, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of people with disabilities.

Your excellency, the Commission commends your Government for the continued commitments in upholding the rights of persons with disabilities. Your commitment your excellency, was recently

demonstrated when you signed the Protocol to the African Charter on the Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Commission would like to request your Excellency to continue providing unwavering support to the disability fraternity through the ratification of this charter.

Your excellency, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, in the recent years, there have been concerns from the disability fraternity where stakeholders have lamented the delays in repealing the Handicapped Persons Act (Cap 33:02) and review of the Disability Act. As a Commission, we join the disability fraternity in calling upon government to expedite the repealing of the Handicapped Persons Act (Cap 33:02) and finalise the review of the Disability Act. The Commission is aware that the review of the Disability Act started in 2016 and is yet to be finalized. Such delays Your Excellency, are detriment to fully domestication of the UNCPRD which includes issues of innovations to support accessibility and inclusivity by persons with disabilities and kills the spirit of inclusivity in the Malawi 2063 agenda.

Your excellency, ladies and gentlemen, the theme **“Transformative solutions for inclusive development: The role of innovation in fueling an accessible and equitable world.”** is very timely. Several questions would be asked including: 1) How inclusive is our country Malawi? 2) what role has innovation played in making Malawi inclusive, 3) how much resource has Malawi allocated to address these challenges. It is hard to tell and your guess is as good as mine.

Your Excellency, lack of assistive devices promote discrimination against persons with disabilities. It is my hope that your government will address these challenges by introducing innovative ways for accessing such devices.

In closing, I want to thank you, your Excellency for the commitment your government has shown in addressing challenges faced by persons with disabilities. I therefore wish you well as we commemorate this very important day.

Thank you.

God bless you and God bless Malawi!

