



## MEDIA RELEASE

### COMMEMORATION OF 2019 INTERNATIONAL ALBINISM AWARENESS DAY

The Malawi Human Rights Commission (the Commission) is pleased to inform the nation that this year's commemoration of the International Albinism Awareness Day (IAAD), celebrated on 13<sup>rd</sup> June every year, will take place on 27<sup>th</sup> June in **Chiradzulu District**. This commemoration is the 5<sup>th</sup> since this day was declared in 2014, with the first commemoration having been celebrated in 2015. The proclamation arose directly from the experiences around the world due to attacks and discrimination against persons with albinism.

The Commission acknowledges albinism as a human rights issue which is addressed in the various human rights instruments including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), International Covenant on Economic and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD), among others. These instruments obligate States to promote and protect human rights. In Malawi, the issue of albinism is also addressed by the Bill of Rights sitting in the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi.

Malawi will join the world at large in commemorating this day around the theme **"Still Standing Strong."** The Commission notes that this theme is calling upon all the people of Malawi and institutions to recognize, celebrate and stand in solidarity with persons with albinism around the world, and to support their cause- from their accomplishments and positive practices to the promotion and protection of their human rights. It is delightful that the objectives of the commemoration are to: increase the global attention to human rights of persons with albinism; help clear people's mind of such prejudices like discrimination and social exclusion surrounding



albinism; mobilise people including key actors to express commitment to and engage in the promotion and protection of human rights of person with albinism; and take stock of what has been achieved, of the state of human rights of person with albinism in the world today and reflect upon the challenges and opportunities to come.

In the spirit of this theme, the Commission wishes to join all other stakeholders in Malawi, including the Association of Persons with Albinism in Malawi (APAM) and Government of Malawi in solidarity while observing this day. In particular, the Commission calls upon all stakeholders to use this this commemoration to take stock of the progress Malawi has so far made in the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with albinism.

Meanwhile, the Commission notes that Malawi has made significant progress in promoting the rights of persons with albinism. The enabling legal, policy and institutional frameworks have been put in place. In addition, Government has worked out a working budget and has started providing finances for the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with albinism. Further, with the support herein, the Commission and other stakeholders, including the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare (MOGCDSW) and the Malawi Police Service (MPS) have begun implementing activities under the protection of persons with albinism. This is commendable.

The Commission also applauds the high level commitment by the government as demonstrated by His Excellency, the State President, who recently invited persons with albinism and all stakeholders to a strategic roundtable dialogue aimed at finding sustainable solutions to the plight of persons with albinism. The Commission wishes to encourage government to continue showing such commitment and leadership in dealing with these issues.

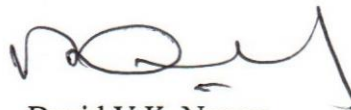
However, the Commission notes that there still exists other challenges which require expeditious attention by all stakeholders in a coordinated manner. These challenges include stigmatization and social exclusion of persons with albinism in the provisioning and delivery of social or basic services; inadequate security of persons with albinism especially in the rural and/ or the poor; inadequate mainstreaming of issues of albinism in development planning including financing;

and inadequate empowerment (socially and economically) of persons with albinism. The Commission wishes to urge all stakeholders to work towards addressing these in a coordinated manner as defined in the National Plan of Action (NAP) on Albinism. In particular, the Commission urges the Malawi Police Service to expeditiously bring to book all those persons that are suspected to be connected to atrocities persons with albinism have since suffered.

On its part, the Commission undertakes to hold all duty bearers and other stakeholders accountable to ensure that they religiously perform their expected duties. The Commission also appeals to all the people of Malawi to take responsibility towards the protection of persons with albinism.

The Commission further appeals to all persons with albinism and their associations, including Association of Persons with Albinism in Malawi (APAM) and Poor and Concerned Persons with Albinism (PACPWA) to work together in unity and harmony among themselves and with all other stakeholders including the Government.

Meanwhile, the Commission stands in solidarity with all persons with albinism and wishes them a **Happy Albinism Awareness Day**.



David V.K. Nungu

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

**MALAWI HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

**13<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2019**