



REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

SPEECH BY

HONOURABLE TITUS MVALO

**MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND
CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS**

DELIVERED

AT

**THE COMMEMORATION
OF THE INTERNATIONAL HUMAN
RIGHTS DAY**

AT

NKOLIMBO GROUND

IN

NTCHEU DISTRICT, MALAWI

FRIDAY, 10TH DECEMBER, 2021

SALUTATIONS

- **Ms. Scader Louis Chairperson of the Malawi Human Rights Commission;**
- **Ms Rosemary Kunitsonyo Kanyuka, Law Commissioner and Commissioner of the Malawi Human Rights Commission;**
- **Honourable Grace Malera, The Ombudsman and Commissioner of the Malawi Human Rights Commission;**
- **Commissioners of Malawi Human Rights Commission**
- **Paramount Chief Gomani of the Maseko Ngoni of Ntcheu**

- **Ms. Habiba Osman, Executive Secretary, Malawi Human Rights Commission and all your members of staff;**
- **Rudolf Schwenk, Resident Coordinator, United Nations and All Development Partners;**
- **Ambassador and Head of Delegation, European Union;**
- **Honourable Simeon Salambula, Member of Parliament for Ntcheu West Constituency;**
- **Mr. Francis Matewere, District Commissioner for Ntcheu;**
- **CSO leaders present;**
- **Members of the Clergy;**
- **All media houses;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

I feel greatly honored and privileged to represent the State President, His Excellency, Dr. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera who would have loved to be here in person to join you all at this important occasion. Today, is indeed a special day all over the world as all nations commemorate the International Human Dights Day which falls on the 10th of December every year. The International Human Rights day is commemorated in recognition of the adoption of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. The UDHR sets out a broad range of

fundamental rights and freedoms to which all of us are entitled. The commemoration of this day, therefore, gives us as a nation, an opportunity to reflect and take stock on how we have enjoyed and continue to enjoy the rights and freedoms as set out in the UDHR as well as our Republican Constitution, but also how we have respected other people's entitlement to enjoy those rights.

Under the leadership of Dr Chakwera in the Tonse Alliance Government, Malawi has been and will always be a country where the rights and fundamental

freedoms are respected and promoted. This is demonstrated by his government's commitment to upholding the rule of law and respecting the independence of the Judiciary and constitutional bodies such as the Malawi Human Rights Commission, Office of the Ombudsman and the Anti-Corruption Bureau among others.

Our country's commitment in respecting human rights has also been recognized at international level. As you are aware, in the year 2020, Malawi was elected a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council for a period of three

years. The election to such a high level and powerful UN Human Rights body is an indication of the trust that the global community has for Malawi. As a nation, we have all the reasons to celebrate this great global recognition and achievement. Throughout our three-year membership in the Human Rights Council and beyond, the Tonse Alliance Government will continue to provide a conducive environment for safeguarding human rights for all Malawians.

The theme for this day all over the world is **“EQUALITY - reducing inequalities, advancing human**

rights”. As we commemorate this year’s international human rights day, it is imperative that we critically reflect on the theme. The theme has come at a right time when the world is facing a new human rights challenge in the name of Covid-19 pandemic. Covid-19 has adversely affected our economy, education, livelihoods and business operations, affecting employment opportunities for many.

The pandemic has exposed our societies to deep rooted inequality in the enjoyment of our human rights in the economic, social, political, and cultural

spheres of life. The pandemic has exposed all our failures to invest in building fair and equitable societies. The Pandemic has created deep-rooted forms of discrimination that have affected the most vulnerable people in societies, including women, girls and people with disabilities. The pandemic has shown the weakness of our systems that have failed to place a central focus on upholding human rights.

As we move forward, the theme for this year's international human rights day demands us to "**Reduce Inequalities**" in our society in order to "**advance**

human rights". We can only reduce inequalities and advance human rights if and only if we join hands to rebuild our economies, repair the damage done by the pandemic, and address the gaps that it has exposed.

The administration of Dr. Chakwera is equally committed to reduce inequalities amidst us by among other things raising the incomes of our citizens.

- Malawians would agree with me that the Tonse Alliance government raised the minimum wage across all sectors by over 40%, the aim is to

increase incomes and reduce inequalities.

- Malawians would agree with me that the first K100,000.00 of the earnings of any working Malawian is now not taxed. The aim is to raise disposable incomes and reduce inequalities.
- Malawians would agree with me that Smallholder farmers are buying farm inputs at a subsidized price so that they can yield bumper harvest which they can both consume and sell. The aim is to improve food security at household level and at

the same time increase households incomes, reduce in equalities and enhance personal dignity.

- Malawians would agree with me that His Excellency the President Dr. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera recently ordered that the majority of contracts in government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) be awarded to local Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), and the aim of that is to economically empower them and reduce inequalities.

- Malawians would agree with me that the National Economic Empowerment Fund (NEEF) has so far disbursed 25 billion kwacha in loans to facilitate creation of businesses, and again the aim is economic empowerment of our people in order to reduce inequalities.
- Malawians would agree with me that Dr. Chakwera's administration ordered that many poor families across the country be added to the list of social cash transfer beneficiaries. The aim was to increase their incomes to mitigate

the effects of Covid and reduce inequalities and the bad effects which such inequalities bring.

- Malawians would also agree with me that just few weeks ago, His Excellency the State President launched the Presidential initiative on job creation, whose aim again is to increase people's income and reduce inequalities.
- All these matters that I have mentioned as issues on which I have said Malawians would agree with me feed into the three broad goals of this Administration of food

security, wealth creation and job creation which are also human rights issues for a dignified life.

The Tonse government acknowledges that despite the various measures and policies we have introduced, inequalities still exist among our people. Therefore, as this Administration, led by Dr. Lazarus Chakwera, continues to do all it can to reduce the existing inequalities through introduction of various initiatives, let me also request the private sector and other key players in the economy to join His Excellency the President in reducing inequalities that are still existing among us in order to advance human rights of

our fellow citizens. Let us remember that unity is power.

Let me acknowledge the great work that the Malawi Human Rights Commission is doing in the promotion and protection of human rights in the country. The Commission has been visible throughout the country implementing various interventions towards the promotion and protection of human rights in Malawi.

The Tonse government is however, aware that the Commission is not represented in all the regions. This under representation prevents citizens of the

concerned regions to fully access the services of the Commission. This is why this government through the Presidential Delivery Unit labs has set up the establishment of the Human Rights Commission's regional office in the North as one of the deliverables of the Commission. In this regard, the Tonse Alliance Government is committed to support the Commission to increase its visibility including at the district level.

Dr. Chakwera's government is further committed to support the Commission as it implements its added responsibilities conferred upon it by the Access to

Information Act (ATIA) and the Gender Equality Act (GEA). His Excellency the President, Dr. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera recognizes that the ATIA and GEA are some of the most important and progressive pieces of legislations that support our vision as a nation of creating an equal, inclusive and informed nation. Therefore, the need for full implementation of these pieces of legislation cannot be over emphasized. That is why this government did not hesitate supporting the Malawi Human Rights Commission when it proposed the establishment of the stand-alone GEA and ATIA Unit within the Commission as

part of its reform agenda. In recognition of the importance of the GEA and ATIA Implementation Units, the government allocated some resources and shall continue to allocate adequate resources specifically for the establishment and operationalization of these Units.

In conclusion, let me reiterate government's commitment to creating a conducive environment for the flourishing of human rights. The Tonse government shall continue to create a more equal society so that we can eliminate the existing inequalities. As we commemorate this important day in the

history of human rights, I wish you all the very best of luck. However, I implore all of you to demonstrate a sense of duty and responsibility as you exercise and enjoy the rights and freedoms enshrined in our Constitution. You should exercise your rights responsibly within the confines of the law and you should never attempt to violate the rights of others in the name of exercising your rights.

May God bless you all, and may God bless our nation.

I thank you for your attention!