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MALAWI ANNUAL AGRICULTURAL POLICY CONFERENCE TALKING POINTS FOR THE MINISTER OF LANDS

1st and 2nd June 2021

Theme: Agriculture Transformation for Wealth Creation



Salutation:

- The Minister of Trade, Honorable Sosten Gwengwe
- Principal Secretary for the Ministry of Agriculture, Mrs. Erica Maganga
- The Principal Investigator for MwAPATA, Professor Thom Jayne
- Professor Richard Mkandawire, Chairperson of MwAPATA
- The Director General of the National Planning Commission, Dr. Thomas Munthali
- Country Director Agriculture Transformation Initiative, Dr. Candida Nankhumwa
- Chairman of parliamentary committee on natural resources; Hon. Werani Chilenga
- The Vice Chancellor of Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), Professor George Kanyama
- Presenters of Various Research Papers
- Distinguished participants,
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning!

- It gives me pleasure, today to be among you in this first ever Annual Agriculture Policy Conference held here at BICC **Agriculture Transformation for Wealth Creation.**"
- As we might all know, policy conferences as the once being held today are important platforms through which different stakeholders; viz, academia, policy makers, private sector organizations, the media, politicians interact, deliberate on and share research results related to different aspects of our development, which is to later shape our policy discourse and indeed policies in the key sectors of development, in this case of today, Agriculture.



- The theme for this conference is ‘Agriculture Transformation for Wealth Creation’, a significant policy focused theme that will be teased out through research work presentations and discussions, generating high-level and policy focused insight that would facilitate the transformation we so desire in the Agriculture sector in order to generate the much-needed wealth in this country.
- Your Honor the vice president, distinguished guests and participants, we all can attest to the fact that our Agriculture sector is faced with a myriad challenge, which if not addressed with serious and impactful policies, will plunge the country into serious socioeconomic calamity. As a sector accounting for above a fifth of the Gross Domestic Product (23.3 percent) in the economy, employing almost 70 percent of the population, the majority of which being women and youth, who currently bear the brunt of the socio-economic ills our country faces, any difficulties in addressing the challenges confronting the sector should never be entertained.
- A week ago, the President of this country mentioned during his State of Nation Address (SONA) that Malawi’s agriculture sector is challenged by poor and smaller land parcels among small-scale farmers, reliance on rainfall which is plagued with a lot of climatic variability, leading to significant droughts in some part of the country, markets that are not as vibrant enough to support wealth creation, and our technological prowess in the sector still remains agrarian, among other challenges, spelling significant need for transformation, if we are to attain the vision of an inclusively wealthy and self-reliant nation as espoused in our new vision, Malawi 2063.
- Distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen, one other critical challenge that requires policy and programmatic transformation in the sector concerns continued deteriorating of land productivity in terms of output per hectare as recent studies



by MwAPATA, and other research studies conducted in this area have noted. There are small farm holdings due to increased land fragmentation influenced by high population density. Our soils quality continues to deteriorate, exacerbated by climatic adversity in form of floods and droughts. Of utmost concern are insecure land tenure systems due to land titling system being followed in the country, which affect investment and productivity of land and indeed the agriculture sector.

- Distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen, research analysis has revealed that land productivity alone, has a bearing on overall agriculture productivity and wealth creation, through secured customary land tenure, increased investment and increased output in agriculture sector among others. Secured land tenure can help households access credit using land registration certificates as collateral. The credit accessed through secured land can encourage farmers to venture in commercial farming geared towards value addition, thereby increasing their incomes and wealth.
- Further, secured land also attract investment in agriculture which boost assets of farmers. As such, as we think about transforming the agriculture sector, one of the focus areas is reforms on land laws, to ensure land is tailored towards fit-for purpose and productive engagement.
- The MW2063 vision recognizes that land related laws are a key factor to realization of the vision. The country enacted ten land-related laws in 2016 and these include the Land Bill, 2016, the Physical Planning Bill, 2016, the Customary Land Bill, 2016, and the Land Survey Bill, 2016, the Registered Land (Amendment) Bill, 2016, the Forest (Amendment) Bill, 2016, the Malawi Housing Corporation (Amendment) (No.2) Bill, 2016, the Public Roads (Amendment) Bill, 2016, the Lands Acquisition Bill, 2016, and the Local Government (Amendment) Bill, 2016.



- Although these bills will go a distance in addressing issues of land rights, land tenure security and land use, there are still more legal reforms required to address other challenges on land, especially as we look at land as a key factor of production in the agriculture sector.
- The Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development has, however, embarked on an initiative to review land laws and policies as directed by His Excellency the president, Dr Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera. The process commenced in February 2021 and it involves Ministry of Lands consulting various stakeholders for their input on the review, in order to ensure that all challenges related to land are addressed.
- The research output from this conference will help the ministry gather more information to enrich the review process, which will support the creation of laws and policies that will enable youth, women and other vulnerable populations in the country and smallholder farmers have access to secured land, in order to ensure inclusive for wealth creation through appropriate land ownership, security and use in all sectors, key of which is the Agriculture sector.
- The Ministry is also developing a land management programme called “National Land Titling to Promote Tenure Security and Sustainable Development in Malawi”. This is a flagship project through which the ministry will implement land related laws, establish District Physical Development Plans and Land use plans, establish district land registries, Land Reform Implementation Unit (LRIU), build capacity of staff and local leaders, establish customary land committees, district tribunals and central land board and register of communal land in all districts of Malawi. These structures are expected to facilitate secure ownership and productive utilization of land and land resources, to ensure everyone in this country benefits from land.



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- Distinguished participants, I want to thank the partnership of MwAPATA Institute, the National Planning Commission (NPC), Ministry of Agriculture, LUANAR's Center for Agricultural Research and Development (CARD), Malawi Confederation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (MCCCI) and other organizations who joint together in organizing this important Conference. I would also like to recognize the efforts of distinguished researchers who put a lot of energy to produce research papers to be presented today.
- With these remarks, I would like to invite you all to a useful engagement during this conference.

I thank you for your attention!