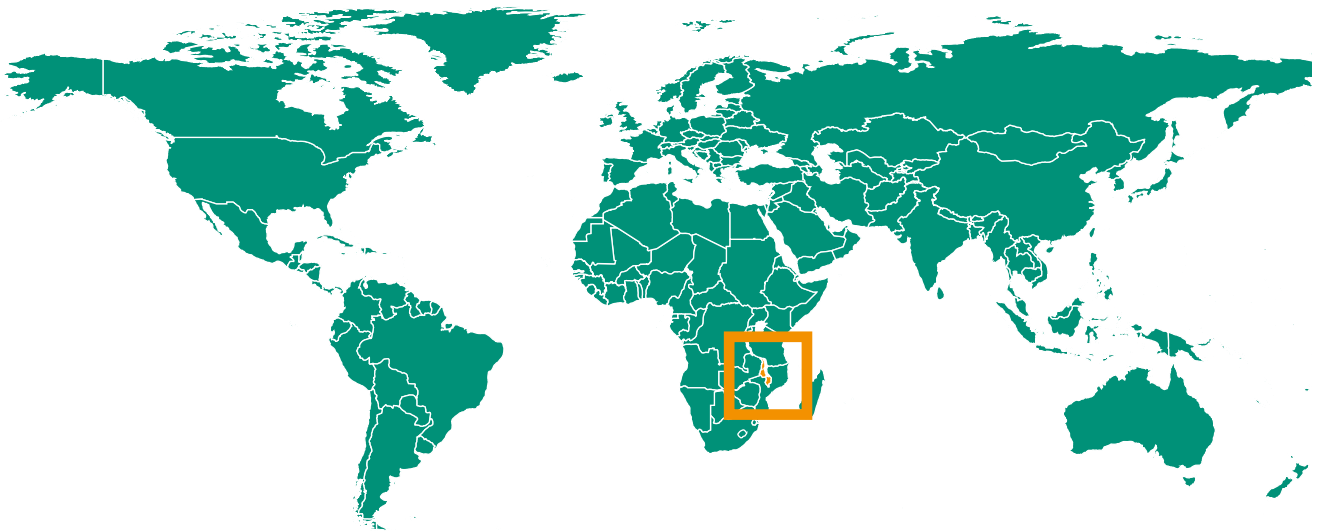


COUNTRY PROGRAMME  
DOCUMENT  
2008 – 2009

# MALAWI





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## FOREWORDS

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



In April 2007, the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT approved our 2008-2013 Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan. This plan intends to promote the alignment of UN-HABITAT normative and operational activities at country level.

The UN-HABITAT Country Programme Documents (HCPD) are tangible components of this Plan as well as a genuine endeavour of UN-HABITAT to better coordinate normative and operational activities in a consultative and inclusive process involving UN-HABITAT's in-country focal points, UN-HABITAT Programme Managers, national governments, UN country teams, sister-UN agencies, development partners and all divisions of our Agency. The UN-HABITAT Country Programme Documents are strategic tools meant as a guide for all UN-HABITAT activities over a two-year period. A major dimension of the UN-HABITAT Country Programme Document is to advocate UN-HABITAT's mandate and address the urban challenges facing the world's developing countries.

The UN-HABITAT Country Programme Documents identify national urban development goals and priorities including shelter, urban governance, access to basic services and credit. Important cross-cutting issues such as the environment, gender, responses to disasters, and vulnerability reduction are also addressed. The UN-HABITAT Country Programme Documents focus on UN-HABITAT country programming. They

serve as a work plan for UN-HABITAT Programme Managers and a reference tool for national and local actors involved in sustainable urban development. According to the Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Action Plan adopted by the UN-HABITAT Committee of Permanent Representatives on 6 December 2007, twenty UN-HABITAT Country Programme Documents were completed during 2008, including the One-UN Pilot countries where UN-HABITAT is active.

In line with the United Nations reform process, UN-HABITAT Country Programme Documents seek to strengthen the role of the United Nations and to demonstrate our commitment. I wish to thank our UN-HABITAT Programme Managers for their input and dedication and for putting together these documents under guidance of the Regional and Technical Cooperation Division and with support from all branches and programmes of the Agency.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Anna K. Tibaijuka'.

Anna K. Tibaijuka  
Executive Director, UN-HABITATs

## MINISTER



Malawi is experiencing rapid urbanisation currently estimated at 5.2% per annum and it is expected that absolute urban population growth in Malawi will exceed rural growth before year 2025. The Government of Malawi is concerned that urbanisation is happening without control and it is a challenge that

has to be addressed. Uncontrolled urbanisation is unsustainable and can lead to negative consequences including poor housing, poor access to basic services such as water and sanitation, poor health and Insecurity. Our major cities of Blantyre, Zomba, Lilongwe and Mzuzu and fast growing towns are experiencing rapid slum growth due to urbanisation. Slums are synonymous with poverty. The Government of Malawi's overarching development priority the sustained reduction of poverty as defined in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS)

It is gratifying to note that UN-HABITAT Malawi programme in the next two years is to support the Government of Malawi to manage its urbanisation sustainability including the critical area of housing and basic services. Addressing housing is very important for the attainment of sustainable urbanisation as decent affordable housing and access to basic urban services is critical to the attainment of the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy and Millennium Development

Goals targets. The Government of Malawi has decentralised some functions including urban

management to the local authorities since they operate closest to the people. Strengthening the capacity of local authorities to effectively manage rapid urbanisation is thus an important priority. I note with satisfaction that these key areas are the focus of the UN-HABITAT programme in Malawi for the period 2008-2009.

The Government of Malawi is committed to working with UN-HABITAT and other supporting partners in the implementation of this programme.

Henry Chimunthu Banda  
Minister of Transport, Public Works and Housing  
Government of Malawi

## SITUATION ANALYSIS

### NATIONAL URBAN POLICY CONTEXT

Although only 20% of its population is classified as urban and it is one of the least urbanized countries in Africa, Malawi is one of the fastest urbanizing countries on the continent with an annual urban growth rate higher than five percent. Absolute urban population growth in Malawi will exceed rural growth before 2025 with an urban population increase of 214,000 per annum during 2020-2025 compared to 193,000 in the rural areas.

With a fertility ratio of four to two, natural urban population growth is becoming an increasingly significant growth factor especially in the large cities. However rural-urban migration is also significant. Drought, decreasing rural landholdings (55% of rural households have less than 1ha of cultivable arable land), lack of off-farm economic activities, increasing rural environmental degradation are all fuelling the move into the towns.

The implications of rapid urbanisation without matching services and houses include an increasing number of households living in poor housing, inadequate infrastructure and services, environmental degradation and high levels of unemployment. Urbanisation in Malawi has become synonymous with poverty and slum growth. The proportion of the urban population living below the poverty line is 25% and 66% of all urban dwellers in Malawi live in slum conditions. It is clear that sustainable urbanisation is now one of the most pressing challenges facing Malawi.

Part one of the Malawi HCPD is divided into four of the five mutually reinforcing focus areas of UN-HABITAT's Medium-Term Strategic Institutional Plan for 2008-2013, as approved by the Governing Council in 2007.

### FOCUS AREA 2: PARTICIPATORY URBAN PLANNING, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

#### STATISTICAL OVERVIEW

##### Urbanisation (2008)

- Total population: 14.2 m
- Urban population: 2.6 m (18.7 %)

##### Annual growth rates (2005-2010)

- National: 2.5 %
- Urban: 5.2 %

##### Major cities (2007)

- Lilongwe: 732, 000

*Source: UN DESA*

##### Slum indicators

- Slum to urban population: 66.4 %

##### % urban population with access to:

- Improved water: 91.1 %
- Piped water: 74.4 %
- Improved sanitation: 55.2 %
- Sufficient living area: 83.3 %
- Durable housing: 63.8 %

*Source: UN-HABITAT, 2004*

#### URBAN PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Urban planning in Malawi was delegated to the cities of Blantyre, Lilongwe, Mzuzu and the Municipality of Zomba in 1992. The Local Government Act of 1998 placed a duty on all assemblies to draw up plans for the social, economic and environmental development of their areas.

Urban planning in Malawi has traditionally been based on the structure planning concept demarcating the urban space into land use zones. This type of planning has not been able to provide the flexibility and responsiveness required for fast growing cities. Generally they have not been the product of an inclusive consultative process. They have also not been linked to a financing strategy to ensure their implementation and therefore slums and urban poverty have continued to grow despite planning. There is need for training workshops for national and local government officials to equip them with skills to enable them provide urban planning services that enable the cities to respond to rapidly changing situations as well as making urban planning an effective tool to combating poverty, social exclusion, environmental degradation and slow economic growth.

With the exception of Blantyre, none of the large urban assemblies have a current urban plan. Previous plans have suffered from minimal implementation and inflexibility to respond to changing





circumstances. Rapid urbanisation is also taking place in smaller towns but they lack the necessary tools for managing this growth and are increasingly displaying signs of uncontrolled growth.

The Government's priority is to ensure that all urban assemblies have current, flexible and responsive urban plans as a means to reconcile and integrate spatial, social, economic, cultural and environmental concerns in urban areas .

## GOVERNANCE

Following the political transformation that occurred in Malawi in 1994 with the introduction of multi-party democracy and the adoption of a new constitution based on the principles of participatory democracy, a decision was taken to decentralize political and administrative authority to the district level to consolidate democracy and realize the country's development goal of poverty reduction. Thus the Decentralisation Policy was approved in 1996 and became operationalised with the Local Government Act of 1998. The key elements of the policy include the devolution of administrative and political authority to the assemblies, promotion of popular participation in governance and development of the assemblies under the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development.

The priority issues and major challenges consist of the following:

- Absence of elected members of assemblies since 2005 and inadequate local leadership capacity for the delivery of effective urban governance and local development .
- Weak institutional capacity at the local authority level hindering efforts to deliver good urban governance and development at the local level.
- Failure by some urban assemblies to generate, collect and account for local revenues resulting in inadequate cash flows.
- Lack of adequate and integrated data for planning and monitoring of a type and at a level that would be useful for urban planning and management.
- Inadequate capacities of community organizations to participate effectively in decision making processes at the community level.
- Lack of clear Government direction and priorities for urban assemblies in such areas as improving their human, technical and financial capacity to deliver municipal services.

## THE URBAN INFORMAL ECONOMY

The urban informal economy is an important and growing sector and is dominated by small scale street traders. In 2006 the Government issued a directive ordering all vendors to move out of the streets into designated areas. This has been achieved at a heavy cost due to daily policing and provision of facilities in the receiving areas. There is need for a sustainable approach to the issue while improving the operational efficiency of the urban informal economy and strengthening its income and employment enhancing opportunities for the urban poor. Key priorities include a supportive regulatory framework for the urban informal economy and the provision of facilities for informal activities.

## FOCUS AREA 3: PRO-POOR LAND AND HOUSING

### URBAN LAND

Land in Malawi is governed by the Land Act of 1965 and the Registered Land Act of 1967. Various land and land related bills are yet to be enacted by Parliament in order to operationalise the Malawi National Land Policy of 2002. The National Land Policy seeks to ensure tenure security and equitable access to land

and its sustainable use. This will be done through a number of strategies outlined in the policy.

With specific regard to urban land, the policy seeks to ensure that the housing delivery system enables all income groups to have access to housing, regularizing land tenure in existing traditional housing areas, upgrading of informal settlements, provision of plots with secure tenure and strategies for arresting the growth of unplanned settlements and controlling urban sprawl.

The momentum of the land reform process has slowed down. The required financial and human resources have not been forthcoming due to budgetary constraints and to the questions which have been raised about the political and technical implications of the proposed reforms. The situation has favoured those especially in the peri-urban areas who benefit from the confused administrative arrangements at the interface between statutory and customary tenure.

#### Priorities

Many priorities of the National Land Policy are yet to be implemented including the following:

- The development of a comprehensive National Land Use and Physical Development Management policy to be employed as a guide for rural and urban land use and development decisions.



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