



COUNCIL FOR NON GOVERNMENTAL
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EDITORS NOTE



RONALD MTONGA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Reader,

Warm greetings! The Editorial Team from Council of Non-Governmental Organisations in Malawi CONGOMA would like to sincerely thank all members, Development Partners and different Stakeholders for immensely supporting us in the year 2019.

As the year winds up, we are indebted to share some major activities implemented through out the year in form of articles presented in this newsletter.

Apart from focusing on Networking and Coordination, Advocacy and Capacity Building, CONGOMA was also in the fore front early this year soliciting emergency

relief items from concerned Stakeholders to donate to those who got affected with Cyclone Idai in the country. Gladly, a number of NGOs participated and we managed to reach various areas which were affected with the phenomenon.

In summary, 2019 has been very involving to CONGOMA Secretariat. Some notable activities carried out during the year are: production of Baseline Report on Public Procurement Monitoring Project Branded Civic Participation in Public Procurement for Better Resource Allocation (CPPP-BPRA), popularizing SDGs before and after elections, holding Regional Meetings across the country and soliciting inputs and way forward for the implementation of National Envisioning Process.

Other issues carried out are ongoing as such they will be taken along to 2020. One of the notable ones being Dialogue with Malawi Government on NGO fees and NGO Act Amendment as currently there are injunctions restraining Malawi Government from implementing New Fees Regulations.

Please refer to detailed information in the subsequent write ups.

Wishing you all Happy Holidays and enjoy the reading!

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More Civic Education Campaigns Needed At Grassroot On Procurement Matters

(By Talumba Mhango Buleya)



A call has gone out to Civil Society Organisations to take an aggressive approach in empowering people in the grassroots with relevant information on Public Procurement Asset Disposal Matters. This call came after presentation of Baseline Findings for Civic Participation in Public Procurement for Better Public Resource Allocation (CPPP-BPRA) Project which took place on Friday, 13 December 2019 at Crossroads Hotel in Lilongwe.

The national Interface had attracted representatives from NGOs, District and Sector Networks, Government Agencies, Chiefs and Development Partners. Highlighting the findings in summary, Executive Director for CONGOMA Ronald Mtonga said that major setbacks affecting Public Procurement processes in Local Councils indicated in the Baseline report include; poor record keeping, Political Interference, Capacity not being there for estimation of prices & contract negotiations.

Based on the findings, it was also noted that the challenges keep on recurring because rights holders do not fully hold duty bearers accountable for they lack information as most of the guide

documents are in English, a language which many do not understand plus a number of them are not aware of necessary procedures concerning procurement processes at the Councils.

According Chairperson for Phalombe District Network Richard Muluzi, people in the Grassroots



One of the Chiefs from Balaka Making a point.



Group Photo of Stakeholders during the National Interface

fail to hold duty bearers accountable because they are not empowered with necessary information.

“We have guidelines for Local Development Fund, Constituency Development Fund and other Procurement Processes in English. We as CSOs are supposed to translate that to vernacular language and share with the Community Structures. Communities are capable but they do not have that simplified information”, explained Muluzi.

In agreeing with Muluzi, Chief Sosola from Balaka District said that ordinary citizens needed to be enlightened on how procurement processes are handled and how the locals can actively participate to ensure that development projects meet the needs of rights holders.

Commenting on the same issue, Director of Planning and Development from Rumphi District Frank Mkandawire said there was need for special session among members of the community to understand better on how procurement processes are handled at the Councils.

CONGOMA is carrying out (CPPP-BPRA) Project in three Districts namely Lilongwe, Rumphi and Balaka with financial Support from the European Union through Tilitonse Foundation. The project

focuses on Monitoring Procurement Processes in Local Councils.

In support of this project; Public Procurement and Disposal of Assets Chief Professional Development Officer Peter Makawa said Procurement processes needed to be properly managed as National Budget is implemented predominantly through Public Procurement where over 70 percent of resources are spent through Public Procurement Systems.

In summary, the national interface agreed that the project should be scaled up to cover more Districts and not only the current ones of Balaka, Lilongwe and Rumphi.

In addition, it was agreed to re-look at the concept of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and deal with political interference in its implementation. Participants looked forward to the second phase of procurement assessment in January 2020.

The project is being funded by European Union through Tilitonse Foundation.

Chiefs In Balaka To Start Holding Mps Accountable

(By Talumba Mhango Buleya)

" We as chiefs in Balaka need to be united and follow CDF expenditure because the funds are meant to benefit ordinary citizens.... "



Chiefs in Balaka District have resolved to strongly join hands and hold Members of Parliament accountable on funds used in the implementation of Constituency Development Fund Projects. This came out after realizing that most MPs do not clearly explain, let alone, have supporting documents on how CDF is used in projects meant to benefit members of the community.

The resolution was made after presentation of findings during the District Interface meeting which was held on 10 December 2019 in Balaka where officials from the District Council, Civil Society Organisations, Members of the Community, Councillors and other concerned stakeholders were brought together.

The District Interface meeting was aimed at presenting findings collected from the first phase of the Public Procurement Monitoring System branded Civic Participation in Public Procurement for Better Resource Allocation (CPPP-BPRA).

During the meeting , it was pointed out that MPs take advantage in the manner in which they handle CDF because the guidelines of CDF empower an MP to have an upper hand when managing CDF projects, for instance, it is clear in the guidelines that when Councils are paying service providers under CDF projects, Member of Parliament has to provide written request to the DC first to release funds , and the Councils

in this context only follow what they have been requested to pay without questioning further details.

Having noticed this, members of the community and the chiefs agreed to take a leading role in holding MPs accountable for they are the ones who voted them into those positions.

"We as chiefs in Balaka need to be united and follow CDF expenditure because the funds are meant to benefit ordinary citizens, and, MPs are our children, we can easily call them to enlighten further on how they are implementing CDF projects," Clarified Chief Sosola.

Commenting on this issue, officials from the office of the District Commissioner appreciated the findings and they clarified that the Council only follows the guidelines and if there were more queries, MPs ought to be approached and map way forward.

Forging ahead, officials from the DC promised members of the community present during the interface that Balaka District Council would start displaying project expenditures on Notice Boards for everyone to have easy access as well as easy tracking of projects being implemented in various areas within the District.

CONGOMA is implementing CPPP-BPRA in three districts namely Balaka, Lilongwe and Rumphi with financial support from the European Union through Tilitonse Foundation.



NPC Promises To Develop A People's Vision (By Talumba Mhango Buleya)

A top official from the National Planning Commission (NPC) has promised to accommodate input of ordinary citizens in the country when crafting a new vision for 2063. These sentiments came from Director General for NPC Dr. Thomas Munthali at a Conference on National Envisioning which was hosted by Council for Non-Governmental Organisations in Malawi – CONGOMA. This function was held on 5 December, 2019 at Lilongwe hotel in Lilongwe where CSOs across Malawi had gathered to share their contributions towards the new vision.

Munthali said that as Malawi is in the process of formulating the successor to Vision 2020, wider consultations would be helpful especially input from people at the grassroots level so that the country develops a vision that is reflective of what ordinary people want.

“As NPC, we are not going to be sitting in the offices and crafting a vision for the country but it is the people that are going to tell us what the Malawi they want to see in 2063 and proposing

how they want to see a typical Malawian looking like at that point in time. As such those that work closely with the people at the grassroots are CSOs. We should really commend CONGOMA for doing this, they took the initiative and invited us to solicit the inputs from CSOs because at the end of the day, this is going to be a people’s vision.”, explained Dr. Munthali.

In his remarks, Dr. Munthali acknowledged the importance of having a vision as the country and following up its implementation.

“The Previous Vision 2020 was good but we did not set ourselves targets, our vision also lacked focus, and this time we need to move towards a more focused vision , the consultations we have had so far , are pointing to us to have an

inclusive and self-reliant nation and this has to be confirmed by Malawians so when we do consultations out there, Malawians would tell us the best vision”, clarified Munthali.

Taking his turn, Programmes Manger for CONGOMA Mr. Simekinala Kaluzi said CSOs



Group work during the conference

NPC Promises To Develop A People's Vision - Cont...

have a vital role to play in contributing ideas towards the new vision because CSOs represent a wider constituency of people from the grassroots.

“ As CSOs we have a big role to play and this is not the first time CONGOMA doing this process, so initially we had to look at what CSOs can do to contribute towards the National Envisioning process, and we know we are representing communities at different levels, so we are acting as a bridge between the communities and the various stakeholders at the National Level. If we have views of the citizens from the communities then those views are going to be part of the National Visioning process, and in that regard

it will be bottom up approach unlike in the past where what was found in the National Plans was what technocrats thought, but this time we will be bringing views from the grassroots to National level”, highlighted Kaluzi.

The whole consultation process among NGOs in the envisioning process is being shouldered by CONGOMA with financial support from IM Swedish Development Partner. CONGOMA is implementing a five-year project in collaboration with IM Swedish Development Partner where among other things the project seeks to enhance civic participation in the formulation of the successor vision to 2020.

QUOTES GENERATED FROM CIVIL SOCIETY CONFERENCE ON NATIONAL ENVISIONING ON 5TH OF DECEMBER, 2019.

(By Talumba Mhango Buleya)



“Where there is no vision, people perish and confused, and where there is the vision and people don't have the rightful values, the vision itself also collapses and perish. NPC needs to do a thorough analysis of very strategic inputs that can champion the value change, because Malawi is known by developing good policies, good documents but if we don't find strategies of championing value system, this will be another talk show”

**Kossam Munthali 2019
(CONGOMA GC Member)**

What I noted in the vision 2020 was we lacked assessing ourselves, we didn't evaluate our selves of who we are, and what we had, geological surveys, we have this volume of gold and with this gold we can turn Lilongwe into this type of city, Nsanje, etc, we always look at what Kenya has achieved, what Nigeria has achieved, and we envision ourselves to say in 2063 we would like to be like Namibia, we would like to be like Kenya, let's use what we have, the land, minerals, and resources we have then from there plan what would want to be in 2063”,

**Robert Mkwezalamba 2019
(Chairperson, HRCC).**



“If we are considering distributing without producing, then we will be distributing poverty.”

Dr. Thomas Munthali, 2019

(Director General for National Planning Commission)



CISANET Launches 2019-2023 Strategic Plan

(By Dyson Mthawanji - CISANET Communications Manager)

On Thursday 28th November 2019, CISANET successfully launched its Strategic Plan for the period 2019 to 2023. The high-level event which took place at BICC in Lilongwe brought together more than 100 participants from local and International Organisations, Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies; Private Sector and Academia.

Speaking at the event, Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development, Honourable Kondwani Nankhumwa who was the guest of honour injected hope in the participants saying government will continue putting more efforts to uplift the agriculture sector which is

the backbone of Malawi's economy.

“As we are all aware, challenges that are currently facing the agriculture sector are numerous and keep evolving. At the core of these challenges is the question: How do we strengthen the resilience of the sector to weather and market shocks? Government is committed to respond to these challenges through sufficient budget allocations and policy implementation. However, government needs strong partnerships with multiple stakeholders to respond to these challenges. Civil Society Organisations should therefore continue collaborating with government

CISANET Launches 2019-2023 Strategic Plan - Cont...

in developing the agriculture sector," Nankhumwa said

The launch of CISANET Strategic Plan came barely few weeks after the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development (MoAIWD) launched its Strategic Plan. Nankhumwa was happy to see synergies between the two vital strategic plans.

He described the event as a milestone in Malawi's agriculture sector as the CISANET Strategic Plan brings government and civil society organisations closer in as far as efforts to enhance agriculture is concerned.

CISANET works in line with its three thematic areas namely Livestock, Agriculture and Dairy Development (LADD); Access to Profitable Markets; and Nutrition Friendly and Aquaculture Resilience. Leaders of these thematic groups made presentations at the event highlighting both successes and challenges that each face.

Making his presentation for LADD, Herbert Chagona who is also Executive Director for Milk Producers Association of Malawi, said Malawi's neglected livestock sector can be revived and become more beneficial to smallholder farmers and the country's economy if the sector is given policy direction and befitting extension services.

Chagona's presentation disclosed that it is sad that the Livestock Department always gets the least share of funding within the Ministry of Agriculture budget and has been given only 3.1 percent in the ministry's current budget. The presentation noted that this, coupled with lack of a standalone policy to govern the livestock sector and absence of extension services, are letting down the sector.

In his response to these concerns, Nankhumwa, concurred with Chagona and promised that government will do something. "In the era of climate change with its effects, our crops are affected. In the event that there are no good rains, farmers can rely on livestock to sustain their lives. In future budgets, government will consider increasing allocation to the livestock sector," said Nankhumwa.

The other two thematic groups also made



Minister of AIWD - Hon. K. Nankhumwa (RIGHT) and Pamela Kuwali shaking hands

their presentations. Dr Felix Lombe (AICC Chief Executive Officer) made a presentation for Access to Profitable Markets; while Virginia Mzuzu from Self Help Africa made a presentation for Nutrition Friendly and Aquaculture Resilience.

Making a key note address titled "Climate Resilience Building for Malawi: Research & Civil Society Food System Partnership Needs" at the same launch, Professor Andy Dougill who is Executive Dean at University of Leeds' faculty of environment in United Kingdom, said there is need for joint efforts among stakeholders to fight against effects of climate change and promote agriculture in Malawi. He also said Malawi should promote research for agriculture to be successful.

"There should be a clear link between the research institutions & policy-making process," said professor Dougill.

CISANET National Director, Pamela Kuwali, said the strategic plan would guide the network in collaborating with government to transform agriculture in Malawi.

"Everything in the Strategic Plan is aligned to the National Agriculture Policy (NAP) which is also trying to transform agriculture to the extent that farmers will be able to increase production and access to markets. Aligning ourselves to this policy will enable us to work with our member organisations, development partners, private sector and government in developing the agriculture sector," she said.

CISANET Launches 2019-2023 Strategic Plan - Cont...

Kuwali said for the three thematic areas to be achieved and for CISANET to best serve its members, the Strategic Plan focuses on five key strategic priorities namely mutual accountability and transparency, capacity building for the network's members, research and policy advocacy, monitoring, learning and evaluation and member engagement, networking and communication.

CONGOMA Participates In A Gender Mainstreaming Workshop 2019-2023 Strategic Plan

(By: Erika Gobena)

Between November 19th – 21st 2019, CONGOMA participated in a three-day workshop on feminism, organized by IM Swedish Development Partner, a partner organisation of CONGOMA. The purpose of the training was to build capacity on the school of feminism and reshaping masculinities. The objective was to empower feminists to be used as a strategy to enable societal change. The workshop was facilitated by Sibongile Chibwe Singine and Mirriam Kanyamula Munthali from the Organization Just Associates.

“We can't talk of societal change if we leave issues of gender behind in our work” , said Dalitso Kubalasa, IM Southern Africa Regional Director, in the opening remarks of the workshop.

The content of the workshop started out from a personal, individual point of view discussing sexual rights and stereotypes of men and women. The second day the course moved on to discuss the issues on a societal level discussing expectations on men and women from the educational system, work place, religion and media. Additionally, the concept of power was discussed from different perspectives and exercises in power analysis were carried out. The third day the workshop focused on feminism on an organizational level with a specific focus on movement building and building feminist leadership.

The concepts of gender, patriarchy, power

(visible, hidden and invisible), feminism and feminist movements were introduced. The participants left the workshop with a deepened understanding of gender gaps, power relations and gender stereotypes that counteracts equality between men and women in Malawi.

The other partners of IM Swedish Development partner and members of CONGOMA that participated in the workshop were Civil Society Education Coalition (CSEC), Women's Legal Resource Centre (WOLREC), Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy (CEPA), Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN) and Centre for Youth Empowerment and Civic Education (CYECE).



Participants showing issues transpiring in the society

Congoma Conducts A Study Tour To Zambia

(By Talumba Mhango Buleya)

Council for Non-Governmental Organisations in Malawi (CONGOMA) in collaboration with National Planning Commission (NPC) and Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN) went for a study visit in Zambia in October, 2019.

Among other things, the visit was aimed at learning how an established and successful planning institution formulates its plans and how it tracks the plans' implementation; learning how Civil Society is actively involved in long term planning, implementation and Monitoring & Evaluation; generating good practices on National Visioning modalities and processes from Zambia; understanding how collaboration, partnership and cooperation between Civil Society, National planning Ministry, Government (especially Ministry of Finance), Development Partners and Private Sector is enhanced and sustained in formulation and implementation of long and medium term plans, and; establishing technical collaboration with partner institutions around long term planning and implementation. Commenting on the tour, Chairperson for CONGOMA Steve Duwa said that it was pleasing to note that the Zambian Government is engaging

But why did CONGOMA choose a study tour in Zambia? the Executive Director of CONGOMA Ronald Mtonga had this to say; "Zambia was a very good choice; we feel like what we learned there can have a very big impact in Malawi. Apart from sharing same political, social, and cultural background, Zambia seems doing well than ourselves. Most things we saw there can work in Malawi. One innovation we saw is how they start budgeting, they start budgeting thematically, which is a good thing. We also saw how CSOs are accommodated in the National Planning Processes, a situation which does not happen in Malawi", summarised Mtonga.

The delegation met officials from the Ministry of National Development Planning, Zambia Institute for Policy Analysis and Research (ZIPAR), Policy Monitoring and Research Centre

(PMRC), and the Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR) members and civil society partners.

Some notable keys lessons from the study tour include: allocation of resources should be made based on agreed priorities; prioritising productive sectors in development planning and programming so that development is sustainable; Implementation of flagship projects should have a commitment when they are approved for implementation so that the change that is sought is achieved; Involvement of the non-state actors is very key to national development, continuous communication with the general public so that there is information flow and feedback between Government and the citizen.

The whole process was made possible with financial support from IM Swedish Development Partner.



Part of the Malawi Team

Civil Society and the citizenry at every level of development planning. Duwa further added that apart from planning, CSOs are also involved in implementation and Monitoring of various development projects.

NGOS IN COMMUNITY LED DEVELOPMENT MOVEMENT

(By Felix Malamula)



Development projects initiated by communities themselves are real and more sustainable because they are implemented with local experience supported by available community assets.

Ann Hendrix-Jenkins, a workshop facilitator from Washington, United States of America, told a team of development experts from different organization in Lilongwe that the Community-Led Development movement is growing upon realization that development cannot be achieved with little or no involvement of the community members.

“Development can only be achieved if a community is given the opportunity to decide on and initiate the development that it thinks will sustainably and positively change its lives,” she told the team.

During the training, the development experts were advised to ensure that at projection inception level, communities where the projects will be implemented which have their input. “Let proposals for projects have input from the communities themselves. That’s one of the strategies we can employ to ensure that sustainable development is achieved,” she added.

One of the organizations championing Community-Led Development (CLD) movement is World Relief. World Relief Country Director, Gibson Nkanaunena says it is time organizations and every Malawian gets committed to changing lives.

“Let’s be committed to changing peoples’ lives. Let us work to actualize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Let’s be champions of Community-Led Development. It’s time to change our mindset because mindset change is important in everything,” said Nkanaunena in his opening remarks.

During the training, it was noted that one of the practices contributing to continued poverty or slow development in communities despite introduction of various interventions by NGOs was that NGOs go to communities with interventions to introduce already decided.

“In most cases, it is the donors funding the NGOs that decide which areas to focus on. As a result, interventions are introduced with no tangible or sustainable change in the communities partly because the community members are not part of the implementers and therefore no ownership is achieved,” added one of the participants.

Community-Led Development ensures that communities are the initiators of projects with the movement playing a role of sensitizing or enlightening the communities on the assets they possess and how they can use the same assets to deal with the challenges they are facing.

As an umbrella body for all NGOs in Malawi, Council for Non-Governmental Organizations in Malawi (CONGOMA) was encouraged to assist by sensitizing NGOs on the importance of encouraging them to embrace CLD in their programming.

Generally, experience has shown that most projects are only introduced to traditional leaders leaving out the entire community membership unaware. However, at implementation stage, the participants observed, the community members in their ignorant state of the project are still expected to do work to implement the project.

Poor work, disunity and apathy towards such community development initiatives have been widely observed.

MANAGE EXPECTATIONS, CONGOMA CALLS

(By Felix Malamula)

Umbrella body for Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the country, CONGOMA has called on political party leaders to ensure that they manage expectations of their supporters on the possible outcomes of the ongoing electoral case at the Constitutional Court in Lilongwe.

Chairperson of CONGOMA National Governing Council Steve Duwa has told local media that the ruling on the case could go either way and therefore it is important that political leaders should prepare their supporters to accept whatever determination the court will make.

“We are planning to engage different stakeholders to discuss a number of issues happening in the country right now one of which is the court case. As CONGOMA, we believe that it is crucial that political party leaders should endeavor to manage expectations of their supporters regarding the case,” said Duwa.

His sentiments come a few days after CONGOMA issued a statement on the current political challenges the country is facing.

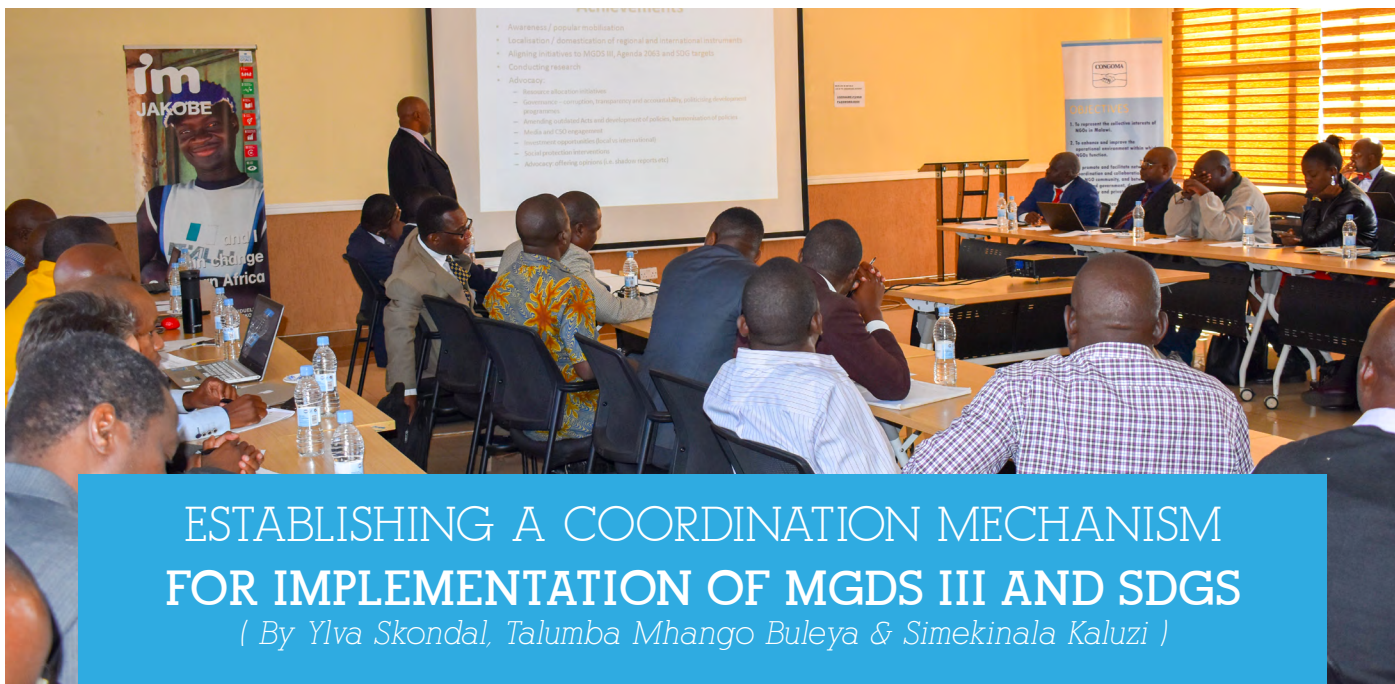
In the statement Duwa jointly issued with Dr. Peter Chinoko, CONGOMA Board of Trustees Chairperson, CONGOMA plans to engage CSOs, Government, political leaders, security agents, the United Nations and Regional bodies to explore means of eliminating violence and looting during demonstrations.

In the statement CONGOMA is also commending Human Rights Defenders Coalition, the organization at the core of the demonstrations against Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC), for suspending the demonstrations to pave the way for the smooth flow of the elections’ case.

“As CONGOMA we strongly commend this wise decision. We also commend earlier announcement by the leader of Malawi Congress Party (MCP) advising MCP followers not to throng and overcrowd the Court premises but follow the Court case from home or office on the radio. CONGOMA acknowledges all these efforts including other efforts by well-meaning stakeholders as means towards a peaceful resolution of the disputed elections,” said the statement.

CONGOMA then appeals to HRDC and the political parties to sustain the period of demonstrations and accept dialogue as a lasting solution to these challenges. It also calls upon the general public to national unity and good citizenship.

“We appeal to the organizers of the demonstrations to seriously consider sustaining the ceasefire period to allow for an impeded process of dialogue besides the current Court case. We also appeal to political parties to open up to genuine dialogue and continue advising their followers to exercise restraint and observe peaceful co-existence and rule of law.”



ESTABLISHING A COORDINATION MECHANISM FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF MGDS III AND SDGs

(By Ylva Skondal, Talumba Mhango Buleya & Simekina Kaluzi)

Council for non-Governmental Organisations in Malawi (CONGOMA) in June 2019 co-convoked a meeting together with partners such as National Planning Commission, UNDP and IM Swedish Development Partner to discuss effective implementation and coordination mechanisms for the MGDS III and SDGs.

In his opening statement Executive Director of CONGOMA Mr. Ronald Mtonga said the platform gave hope on finding formulae as regards to how different development stakeholders can learn from each other; fit into each other; measure and monitor same thing; and move together while realising tangible development results.

Building on that Country Director of IM Swedish and Development Partner Mr. Steve Tahuna emphasized that he hoped the discussions would be instrumental in enhancing public services through effective implementation of both MGDS III and SDGs.

Adding further, Economic Advisor at UNDP Dr. Moses Sichei emphasised the importance of collaboration between different actors.

“A shared vision should be embraced while enhancing greater coordination between and among Government, Parliament, private sector, media, development partners, NGOs, local communities and disadvantaged groups;

and building and fostering strong partnerships with different groups, including the youth”, said Dr.Sichei.

Agreeing with Dr. Sichei, Director General of National Planning Commission Dr. Thomas Munthali, agreed with the importance of collaboration and called for a multi-stakeholder approach in the implementation of MGDS III, SADC development frameworks, Agenda 2063 and SDGs by working together to accelerate national development.

“Harmonising efforts are imperative to maximise usage of available resources and avoid duplicating efforts”, said Dr. Munthali.

He therefore pledged that NPC would ensure that formal coordination mechanisms are in place in order to scale up and scale out national development.

During the meeting, presentations were made on the topics of CSO coordination in SDGs, social accountability programme, economic planning and development, localising implementation of MGDS III and SDGs, case studies from other countries on SDG coordination as well as Sector Working Groups reporting on their progress.

Moving forward, stakeholders made resolutions to empower the National Planning Commission to have a joint oversight role among Sector Working Groups (SWG),



Group photo of participants

establish accountability mechanisms for each SWG and establishing a basket fund for SWGs to ensure that no such group is left behind due to finances. Further resolutions were made to ensure that the Sector Working Groups are

multi-stakeholder and including all players such as Government, DPs, CSOs, Private Sector and media, among others as well as ensuring that each group has a progress tracking mechanism.



SDGs Taskforce Demands Implementation Of SDGs Before And After Elections

(By Talumba Mhango Buleya)

As Malawi approached Tripartite Elections on 21 May 2019, the National Civil Society Taskforce on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Malawi requested all political parties and various development stakeholders to ensure that Malawi continues to embrace SDGs. This came after noting that most development initiatives are put aside as political parties and citizenry focus on elections.

According to Programmes Manager for CONGOMA Mr. Simekina Kaluzi, Malawi just like any other country should sustain strong commitments to specific actions, timelines and financing to deliver these important goals by 2030.

“As a coalition, we demand a country where our economy creates prosperity for all and not just the richest few, where governments



Media Practitioner during the press briefing

and private sector are held to account to respect the rights and dignity of all Malawians and treasure the country so that it remains habitable for current and future generations”, said Kaluzi.

He also added that Government of Malawi should focus on ways for transforming unfair economic practices and policies that create inequalities and increases poverty.

“The taskforce further demand promotion of Gender Equality, decent work and investment in health and education, particularly of women, girls and marginalized communities. Our communities must be free from fear and want, with zero tolerance for gender-based violence, discrimination and human trafficking”, pointed out Kaluzi.

In her presentation, another SDGs taskforce member from Action Aid, Linda Harawa said that the Coalition is convinced that the Sustainable Development Goals are an historic opportunity to accelerate progress towards a better future for Malawians and global citizens; as such the alignment of the SDGs and party aspirations would serve Malawians better.

“To this end, our leaders should commit to implementing these goals by ensuring the following tenets: Walk the Talk, Finance Our Future, and be transparent and accountable”, said Harawa.

Taking his turn, Chairperson for Human Rights Consultative Committee who is also

an active member of the SDG taskforce Mr. Robert Mkwenzalamba highlighted that the country needs to address to address the current context of inequality and planetary destruction if Malawi is to truly eliminate poverty and enable a life of dignity for all.

“We believe Malawi has the resources and knowledge to eradicate poverty, inequalities and impact of climate change. But Government of Malawi leadership and the private sector and NGOs must be held to account to ensure a just distribution”, explained Mkwenzalamba.

The SDGs taskforce is composed of key civil society thematic networks and other civil society Organisations and is housed at CONGOMA.



CONGOMA's Programs Manager, Simekinala Kaluzi giving an interview



STATE OF PREPAREDNESS FOR THE ELECTIONS.

(By Talumba Mhango Buleya)

As Malawi holds elections in May 2019, Council for non-Governmental Organisations in Malawi- CONGOMA and Malawi Electoral Support Network jointly came up with a communique on State of preparedness for the elections after successfully convening a Civil Society Networks Elections Coordination Planning meeting with various stakeholders on 16 May, 2019 at Sunbird Lilongwe Hotel.

According to the communique which was signed by CONGOMA Chairperson Mr. Steve Duwa,

The meeting sought to ensure that the electoral activities on 21 to 22 May, covering polling, vote counting, transmission and determination of results should be peaceful and credible; the processes especially polling should

be sufficiently inclusive and that the management, transmission, determination and announcement of results would be in full compliance with the dictates of the electoral law; and the performance of state agencies especially the Electoral Commission and the Malawi Police Service would demonstrate institutional capabilities and effectiveness.

The communique further read key topics

deliberated which include; Civil society interventions to ensure that the electoral process on the polling day and its outcomes would be credible and inclusive; Management of polling, vote counting; results transmission and announcement of results; State of preparedness of the Malawi Police to provide adequate security for the votes and the people; including prevention and timely responses to Violence Against Women in Elections (VAWE); Role of civil society observers in managing and resolving any potential disputes on the Election Day.



Group photo of participants

The function drew together several stakeholder organisations namely; the Malawi Police Service, Malawi Electoral Commission, Malawi Human Rights Commission, Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare, the 50:50 Campaign Management Agency, and Malawi Congress of Trade Unions, and the CONGOMA Board.

Information in the communique was guided by Sustainable Development Goals Especially Goal Number 16 where state parties, including Malawi committed to seek peaceful and inclusive societies, rule of law, effective and capable institutions.

CONGOMA Donates 13 Million Relief Items TO FLOOD VICTIMS IN ZOMBA

(By Talumba Mhango Buleya & Simekinala Kaluzi)

Following disastrous effects of Cyclone Idai which hit Malawi early 2019, Council for Non-Governmental Organisations in Malawi – CONGOMA appealed to its members and mobilised relief Support items worthy 13 Million Malawi Kwacha which got donated on 18

April, 2019. This came after the State President Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika had declared State of Disaster in areas hit by heavy rains and floods in the country.

District Medical Officer Dr Wilson Ching'ani thanked CONGOMA for the medical supplies and emphasized that the Medical Supplies were most wanted at the District Hospital. In response, CONGOMA Governing Council representative Mr. Happy Makala, thanked all NGOs that contributed towards the success of the support. He then called for prudence in the utilization of the medical supplies.



Top official from Goods for Good, Constance Hauya, making few remarks

The relief items were donated in Zomba District specifically at Pemba and Saima Camps in Traditional Authority Mwambo where over 200 households were reached. These items included blankets, clothing, maize flour, sugar, salt, tablets of soap, buckets, Likuni Phala for porridge, soya pieces and medical supplies.

Before the distribution of other relief items, Medical supplies amounting to two Million Malawi kwacha were donated first at Zomba District Health Office. Receiving the Medical Supplies on behalf of members of staff at the hospital,



CONGOMA Officials distributing relief items

Later during the day, people from the two camps of Pemba and Saima gathered at Ntonda Primary School where each house hold received the following quantity of relief items: 2kgs Sugar, 20kg Maize Flour, Blanket, 1kg Salt, 2.5kgs Likuni Phala, 5 packets of 500g Soya Pieces, 10 tablets of 90g Soap, 40 Litres bucket and 10 pieces of clothes.

Congoma Donates 13 Million Relief Items - Cont...

Representing Donating NGOs at the function, a top official from Goods for Good Constance Hauya emphasized on good usage of the donated items among the households that received the items.

Taking his turn, CONGOMA Governing Council Representative Mr. Happy Makala thanked donating Institutions, CONGOMA Secretariat, Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA) and Zomba District Council for their efforts in ensuring the relief distribution took place. He therefore advised the citizens who were to receive the relief items to put them to good use. He also encouraged other organisations to come forward and assist the cyclone victims.

Welcoming the support, representative of Zomba District Council and DODMA Mr. Young Chiwindo, appreciated the support and called for more relief items to suit diverse needs of the victims.

Concurring with Mr. Chiwindo, Group village Headman, Mr. Godfrey appreciated the relief items and promised that they would be put in good use. This was also highlighted after random interviews were done with various recipients of the relief items on the day of distribution. Cyclone victims from the two camps heaped praise on CONGOMA being the first responder, for coming to their rescue. They promised to put the items to good use as they were both intensely affected and poverty stricken.

The relief Support items donated were collected from the following Organisations; Goods for Good, Little Dresses for Africa, Love Support and Unite, Children and Pastors Care Ministry, Total Land Care Malawi, PACENET, Malawi Association of Counseling, Eva Demaya Centre,



Officials from Goods for Good distributing relief items

Malawi Electoral Support Network (MESN) and CONGOMA.

CONGOMA is aware there were large number of NGOs that did not go through CONGOMA to donate or serve the disaster victims. CONGOMA commends such NGOs for timely coming to the rescue of needy households. What may be needed in future is to have a stronger NGO Coordination mechanism to around this problem. At the same time, there is need to find a lasting solution for addressing the problem of flood victims. Ways should be found to permanently move house-holds out of flood prone areas or permanently harvest flood water for home or infrastructural use.

NEWLY ELECTED REGIONAL CHAIRPERSONS



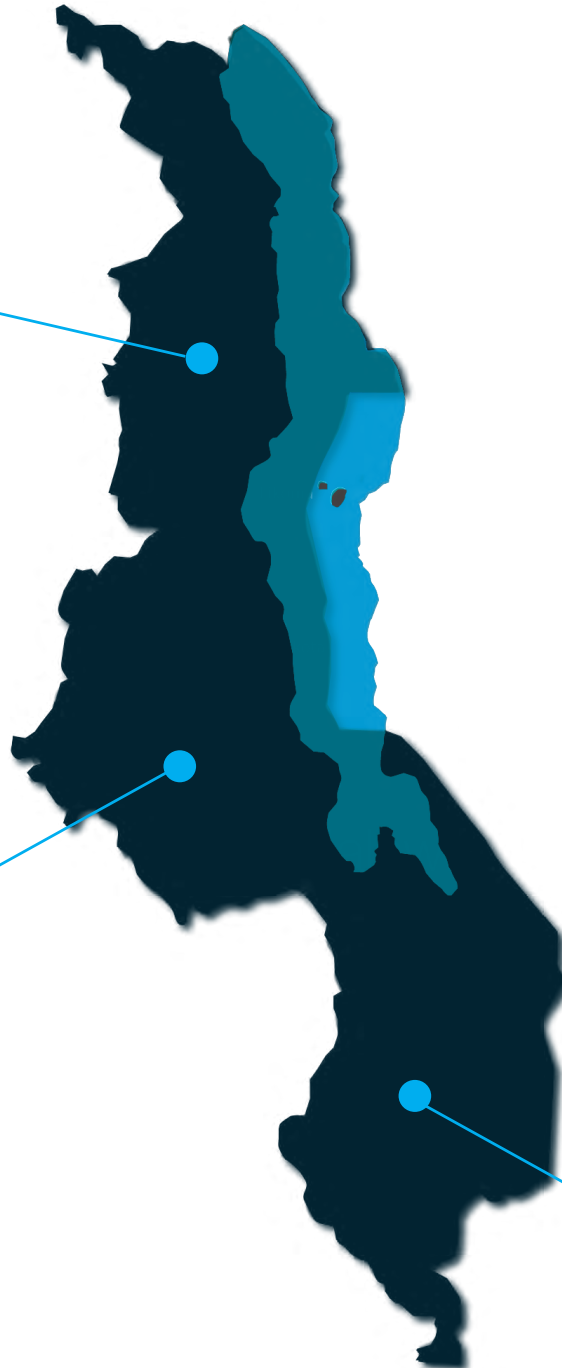
TAWONGA KAYIRA
Regional Chairperson for the North
(Executive Director for Gender Governance Institute)



Hestings Mkwinda Nyasulu
Regional Chairperson for the Centre
(Executive Director, White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood)



Clifford Kuyokwa
Regional Chairperson for the South
(Executive Director for Stephanos Foundation)



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COUNCIL FOR NON
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ORGANISATIONS
IN MALAWI



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