



**Government of Malawi**

# **NATIONAL POPULATION POLICY**

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# **NATIONAL POPULATION POLICY**

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## **FOREWORD**

Malawi has made remarkable progress in improving the socio-economic welfare of its people in the past years. However, the country continues to face challenges posed by population dynamics such as high fertility and mortality rates, high child dependency burden, unemployment, and environmental degradation.

To mitigate the impact of such challenges on the welfare of Malawians, Government has updated the country's 1994 National Population Policy to ensure that it is kept abreast with the current population and development issues. The overall goal of the policy is to contribute to the improvement of the standard of living and the quality of life of the people of Malawi. The previous policy focused on reducing the growth rate of the population, while the current one is aimed at supporting the achievement of sustainable socio-economic development as envisaged in the national development agenda and international development framework.

In this vein, Government is committed to provide the necessary support and enabling policy and programme environment for the implementation of the policy. Since population issues are crosscutting in nature, the implementation of the policy calls for concerted efforts by all. In this regard, Government will also ensure effective coordination of the policy implementation process among various stakeholders in population and development, by providing adequate institutional and technical capacity to implementing partners.

I wish to thank all those who have given their time, ideas and expertise during the policy revision process. I wish to appeal to all stakeholders to support Government in implementing the policy.

Finally, I would like to thank Her Excellency the President, Mrs Joyce Banda for providing the economic development framework in which this population policy has been formulated.

Goodall Gondwe, MP

**MINISTER OF ECONOMIC PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

## **PREFACE**

Malawi's population has grown from 4 million in 1966 to 13.1 million in 2008. Currently, in 2012, it is projected to be at 14.8 million. At the current rate of growth, it is estimated that the population will at least triple by 2050. Such a rapidly increasing population will undermine the Government's ability to provide quality social services in various sectors, including health, education, and housing, and it will accelerate depletion of natural resources such as forests and degradation of land and the environment.

This scenario threatens the sustainability of the momentum Malawi has gained to date in improving its socio-economic indicators such as enrolment rate in schools, reduction in poverty levels and improved food and nutrition security. In this regard, the revised National Population Policy seeks to enhance prioritization, coordination, and implementation of the country's population challenges. The policy's goals and objectives are consistent with the government's broader goal of achieving sustainable human development. The policy is also in line with the recommendations of the Programme of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development and the Millennium Development Goals framework, which call for integrated and rights based approaches to addressing population issues.

A wide range of stakeholders, including District Executive Committees (DECs), Religious and Traditional Leaders, Parliamentarians, Youth Groups and government departments have been consulted in the development of this policy. The strategies and interventions for the implementation of the policy will be outlined in the National Population Policy Action Plan that will be formulated in due course. The interventions will be implemented through a multi-sectoral approach by various partners, at national and district levels.

Ted Sitima-wina

**SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

## Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
CMR	Child Mortality Rate
CPR	Contraceptive Prevalence Rate
FBOs	Faith Based Organisations
FPE	Free Primary Education
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IHS	Integrated Household Survey
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
IPDP	Integration of Population Variable in Development Planning
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MDHS	Malawi Demographic and Health Survey
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NPP	National Population Policy
NPP PoA	National Population Policy Plan of Action
NSO	National Statistics Office
PHC	Population and Housing Census
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
WMS	Welfare Monitoring Survey
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

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# **SECTION ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Background**

This policy is an update of the first National Population Policy, which Malawi adopted in 1994. Although the first policy was developed prior to the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), it was implemented in full recognition of the recommendations of the ICPD Programme of Action, to which Malawi is a signatory. The 1994 policy recognized the strong interrelationship between population dynamics and socio-economic development, and provided a framework for addressing the country's developmental challenges through structured management of its population dynamics including rapid population growth, high levels of fertility and mortality. The policy was aimed at addressing developmental challenges that emanate from unmanaged population growth, high levels of fertility and mortality. The implementation of the policy contributed to several achievements such as reduction in mortality rates, increase in use of contraception, improvements in primary school enrolment rates, and increased awareness on the link between population and development.

However, key challenges remain in efforts to improve management of population issues and optimize the role of population dynamics in sustainable socioeconomic development. Maternal mortality rates remain exceptionally high. Malnutrition, Malaria and Tuberculosis continue to be major causes of poor health and mortality, and many children are orphaned due to HIV/AIDS related deaths. Despite the good progress made in enabling women access and use contraception, there are marked inequalities in contraceptive use across regions and socioeconomic groups, and fertility rates have remained stubbornly high. Contraceptive discontinuation rates are relatively high and about a quarter of women who need to use family planning are not doing so. The average age at marriage remains low and the country has relatively high teenage pregnancy rates, which contribute to high fertility and maternal deaths. The high child dependency ratio makes it difficult to improve quality of education, health care, and accumulate savings for future investments.

The combined effects of population growth and climate change are increasing food insecurity, environmental degradation, and poverty levels in the country. Malawi is also experiencing rapid urbanization, which is exerting pressure on the capacity of the government and the private sector to provide adequate and quality social services and create jobs for urban residents. Malawi continues to have both financial and technical resource constraints in health and other social sectors. Funding for population programmes is limited and the shortage of health workers adversely affects delivery of key population interventions like family planning.

This policy has been developed to revitalize the country's population and development programme in the light of the persisting and emerging challenges. The policy also seeks to align Malawi's programme firmly with

key national and international development frameworks including the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS II), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the ICPD Programme of Action. The implementation strategies of the policy will be reviewed accordingly following relevant modifications that may come up when these frameworks are revised. The policy also supports the implementation of various sectoral national policies addressing issues related to population dynamics.

The overall goal of this National Population Policy is to contribute to the improvement of the standards of living and quality of life of the people of Malawi. The policy will provide a framework for enhancing prioritization, coordination, and implementation of programmes for addressing population and development challenges at national and district levels.

The Government of Malawi recognizes the strong interrelationship between population dynamics and socio-economic development. Therefore, in order for the country to attain sustainable development, the management of its population challenges should be through an all inclusive and multi-sectoral approach.

## **1.1 Population and Socio-economic Situation**

Population and Housing Census (PHC) data show that the Population of Malawi has grown from 8.0 million in 1987 to 9.9 million in 1998, and to 13.1 in 2008. The annual growth rate between 1998 and 2008 was 2.8 percent. Projections by the National Statistical office indicate that the current population of about 15 million people is likely to reach 45 million by 2050. The population density in 2008 was 139 persons per square kilometre. The population is youthful with 54 percent of the population aged 18 years and below.

The Total Fertility Rate (TFR) is currently estimated at an average of 5.7 births per woman. The fertility rate has declined slowly from 7.6 in 1984 to 6.7 in 1992 and 5.7 in 2010 as indicated in the 2010 Malawi Demographic and Health Survey (MDHS). The slow decline in fertility is not in line with the notable improvement in the contraceptive prevalence rate for modern methods of contraception among married women, which increased from 7.4 percent in 1992 to 42.2 percent in 2010. This anomaly needs to be investigated and its root causes addressed. The impact of high fertility on future population growth is such that population continues to grow for another five to eight decades after attaining replacement level fertility of 2.1 children per woman due to the effect of Population Momentum. This results from the high concentration of young people who are yet to go through their reproduction.

Among the main features of Malawi's fertility is the high adolescent fertility rate that result from low levels of educational attainment and early marriage among women. There are also marked differentials in levels of fertility across the country's socioeconomic groups. For instance, the 2010 DHS data show that the fertility rate for women in the poorest 40 percent of households is 6.8 children, while the rate for the richest quintile is 3.7. The fertility rates for

rural and urban residents are 6.1 and 4.0, respectively. Similar differentials are observed across education categories; women with no education have 6.9 children while those with secondary education have 3.8 children.

Malawian women and men would like to have fewer children than previous generations, and they would like to have fewer children than the current fertility rate. The desired family size in 1992 was 5.0 for women and 5.2 for men. According to the 2010 DHS data, the desired family sizes are 3.9 for women and 4.0 for men. About 26 percent of married women have an unmet need for family planning, meaning that they want to delay the next pregnancy or stop childbearing, but they are not using any method of family planning. These figures show that there is potential to increase contraceptive use and reduce fertility levels if barriers of access to and use of family planning can be addressed.

According to the 2008 census, life expectancy at birth is at 51.4 years for females and 48.3 years for males. Malawi has made outstanding progress in reducing childhood mortality, and it is one of the few African countries on course to achieve the MDG 4 target by 2015. DHS data show that the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), declined from 134 to 66 deaths among children aged less than one year per 1000 births between 1992 and 2010. The Under-Five Mortality Rate declined from 243 to 112 deaths among children aged less than 5 years out of 1000 births over the same period. However, little progress was made in reducing the Neonatal Mortality Rate, which declined from 41 to 31 deaths among children aged less than 28 days out of 1000 live births over this period.

According to DHS data, the HIV prevalence rate among adults aged 15-49 has declined from 11.8 percent in 2004 to 10.6 percent in 2010. However, marked gender differentials in HIV prevalence persist, especially among the young people aged 15-24. In 2010 the HIV prevalence whereby the 2010 rate for young females is 5.2 percent while for males it is 1.9 percent. The Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) remains worryingly high, although it has declined from 984 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2004 to 675 in 2010. The country has registered marked improvement in the proportion of women who deliver babies with assistance of skilled health attendants from 57.1 percent in 2004 to 71.4 percent in 2010. The high number of maternal deaths is bound to decline considerably if this progress is enhanced and quality of maternity care improves, especially following prioritization of safe motherhood through the 2012 Presidential Initiative on Safe Motherhood.

The population of Malawi is predominantly rural. According to the 2008 PHC, 14 percent of the total population lives in urban areas. However, the country is urbanizing at a fast rate, and the United Nations Population Division data project that 32 percent of Malawians will be living in urban areas by 2050. In order to optimize the role that urbanization can play in promoting socioeconomic development in the country, there is need to improve urban planning, delivery of social services, infrastructural development, and the capacity of the private sector to generate adequate quality jobs. These efforts should also be accompanied by enhancement of livelihood opportunities in

rural areas, including development of rural growth centres to prevent excessive migration to the country's major cities.

Malawi's population is unevenly distributed across the country. The Southern Region constitutes 33 percent of the total land area and 47 percent of the total population. The Central Region has 38 percent of the total land area and 41 percent of the population, while the Northern Region constitutes 29 percent of the total land area and 12 percent of the population. These imbalances are likely to affect patterns of rural-urban and rural-rural migration in future.

Malawi's economy is dominated by rain-fed smallholder agriculture. About 81 percent of the population earns a living from agriculture while 80 percent of the nation's food comes from subsistence farming. Women provide 87 percent of agricultural labour. Malawi's economy and agricultural production are, therefore, severely vulnerable to effects of climate change, including erratic rains, recurring droughts, heat waves, and flooding.

Since 2004, the country has made good progress in growing its economy, achieving average annual economic growth rates of about 7 percent. The percentage of households with access to safe potable water increased from 73 to 80 percent between 2005 and 2010, while those with basic sanitation increased from 84 to 93 percent over the same period. However, the percentage of households living below the poverty line marginally declined from 52.4 percent in 2004 to 50.7 percent in 2010 (IHS, 2011), indicating that more efforts are needed to reduce poverty levels.

The Government recognizes that human capital development is key to sustaining social and economic development. According to the 2008 PHC 59 percent of adult women and 64 percent of men are literate. There has been a marked increase in school enrolment since the government launched the Free Primary Education (FPE) programme in 2004. The Primary School Net Enrolment Ratio increased from 82 percent in 2004 to 91 percent in 2010. However, dropout rates remain high and progression to secondary school low. This problem is particularly acute among girls due to early pregnancies, and marriages, family and cultural responsibilities, among other factors.

In general the quality of primary education in Malawi had declined due to increased student/teacher ratios. The increase in the number of students has resulted from the reduction of schooling costs due to the FPE programme and the sharp increase in the number of school-going age children because of high fertility. Urban areas have a higher net primary school enrolment ratio than rural areas even though the gap is narrowing since 2007. The differences in net enrolment ratios between rural and urban areas is due to easy access to education facilities in urban areas compared to rural areas, influence of cultural factors, and the higher utilization of child labour in the agricultural sector in rural areas.

The environment is also an important aspect of development. High population growth is the major cause of environmental degradation as manifested in increased deforestation, soil erosion and siltation, depletion of fish stocks and

air and water pollution due to improper management of liquid and solid waste. Natural forests and forest reserves are being depleted for firewood, pole extraction, curio making, tobacco curing and resettlement, among others. The 2008 census data show that only 6.7 percent of households have access to electricity and 98 percent of households depend on firewood for cooking. Through erratic rainfall, recurring drought, flooding and heat waves, Climate Change is compounding the adverse effects that population growth has on preservation of the environment and natural resources.

Malawian women, who constitute 52 percent of the total population, continue to be marginalized in various socio-economic spheres and are, therefore, unable to effectively contribute to socio-economic development. Advancing empowerment of women through improved education and employment opportunities; elimination of harmful traditional practices and gender-based violence; and ensuring women's ability to make decisions about their Sexual and Reproductive Health are key to achieving gender equity and equality, and overall socioeconomic development in Malawi.

## **1.2 Rationale**

Population influences all aspects of socio-economic development. Malawi's population is growing rapidly at 2.8 percent per annum (PHC, 2008) mainly due to high fertility. Rapid population growth exerts pressure on the provision of social services such as education and health care, and it undermines efforts to preserve the environment, adapt to consequences of climate change, and uplift the wellbeing of Malawians. High fertility is a key barrier to socioeconomic empowerment of women, and a major contributor to high child and maternal mortality.

Reduction in fertility and mortality will help reduce the high child dependency burden and create a population structure dominated by people in the working age range. If appropriate investments are made and economic reforms enacted to ensure that the surplus labour force resulting from this demographic process is well educated, healthy, skilled and economically engaged, the country will reap massive economic benefits, referred to as the Demographic Dividend, from effective management of its population challenges. The National Population Policy has been revised to guide programme responses that will help minimize the negative effects of population dynamics and optimize the role of population as a key development resource for the country. Achieving these objectives will help achieve sustainable economic growth, as envisaged in the MGDS II and MDG development frameworks.

The policy will address the main challenges and capitalize on opportunities that have come up during the implementation of the 1994 population policy and related programmes. The challenges include weak advocacy for prioritization of population and development issues at policy, resource allocation, and programme implementation levels; weak political will and educational campaigns to promote the small family norm and address barriers of access and use of family planning; limited financial and technical resources

for implementation of population programmes; poor coordination of population programmes among various stakeholders; insufficient use of data for development planning; and weak mainstreaming of population dynamics in development planning and other relevant sectors. Increased awareness of linkages between population and development, increased demand for smaller families and family planning, and a combination of increased national and global commitment to prioritize and revitalize family planning and population programmes are key opportunities on which this policy will build its implementation strategy. In this regard, the primary purpose of this policy is to create an enabling policy and programme environment for the prioritization, coordination, and implementation of population and development programmes at national and district levels.

### **1.3 Linkages with Relevant Conventions, Policies and Strategies**

#### **1.3.1 Linkages with International Conventions and Protocols**

Malawi ratified several international instruments aimed at improving the quality of life of its people through interventions in population and development. These include the MDGs, the 1994 ICPD Programme of Action (ICPD-PoA), the 1992 Dakar/Ngor Declaration on Human Development of 1992, and the African Union's 2006 Maputo Action Plan for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. This policy will be implemented in line with guidelines in these development frameworks.

#### **1.3.2 Linkages with Malawi Growth and Development Strategy**

The current overarching national development blueprint of the government of Malawi is the Vision 2020, which is operationalized through the MGDS. The overall goal of the MGDS II, which covers the period 2011-2016, is poverty reduction through sustainable economic growth and infrastructure development. The MGDS II, through the Social Development policy priority areas, recognizes the importance of integrating population variables in development planning. Through a number of strategies under the Population and Development sub-theme in the MGDS II's Social Development theme, the MGDS has focused on achieving the following outcomes on population issues:

- Lowering fertility in all reproductive age groups through advocacy programmes;
- Expanding the range and improving access and quality of health services focused on common health problems to reduce morbidity and mortality;
- Providing accessible, affordable and comprehensive family planning and other reproductive health services to all people who need them through informed choice in order to enable them to attain their reproductive health rights and goals;
- Improving the quality of life of those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS;

- Enhancing programmes that increase awareness of the link between population and development and promote integration of population dynamics in development planning; and
- Improving methods of collection, analysis, dissemination, and use of demographic and socio-economic data, disaggregated by age, sex, districts, and Traditional Authority through capacity building.

The National Population Policy, therefore, constitutes an integral tool for the achievement of Malawi's broad development priorities and agenda. The policy will guide formulation of strategies and interventions to promote prioritization and integration of population dynamics in broader development plans and strategies as outlined in the policy objectives.

### **1.3.3 Linkages with Sectoral Policies**

This policy is a response to current population dynamics and their potentially negative implications on sustainable socio-economic development. In this regard, the policy builds on and contributes to the achievement of various sectoral policies including:

- Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy (2010) - provides guidelines for the implementation of family planning and other reproductive health services;
- National Environment Policy (2004) - guides sound management of the environment and natural resources;
- National Gender Policy (2003) - addresses issues of gender inequality and empowerment of women;
- HIV and AIDS Policy (2003) - advocates for mainstreaming of HIV and AIDS in development planning at all levels;
- Policy on Orphans and other Vulnerable Children (2003) - aims at promoting care and support for orphans and other vulnerable children;
- The Education Policy (2004) - seeks to advance school enrolment and progression and overall quality of education;
- National Land Policy (2002), which promotes security of tenure and equitable access to land to facilitate the attainment of social harmony and broad based social and economic development through optimum and ecologically balanced use of land and land resources;
- National Policy on the Elderly Persons (2012), which aims at improving access to social services and social security for the elderly;
- National Policy on Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (2012), - advocated for empowerment of persons with disabilities;
- National Youth Policy (2005) - addresses issues that impinge on the ability of adolescents and young people to contribute to national development; and
- National Nutrition Policy (2009) - advocates for achievement of food and nutrition security.

The National Population Policy will contribute to the achievement of broader development goals and the targets of sectoral policies by providing advocacy and coordination expertise. By mainstreaming population issues in the other sectors, the policy will help optimize synergies and enhance value for money in addressing broader development challenges linked to population issues.

## **1.4 Guiding Principles**

The policy seeks to minimize adverse effects of population dynamics such as rapid population growth, while optimizing the role of dynamics like urbanization and projected increase in the labour force resulting from declines in fertility and mortality in socioeconomic development. The implementation of the policy shall be guided by the following principles:

Recognizes the sovereign right and responsibility of the Government and people to exercise their best judgments in dealing with population problems, having regard to the country's constitution and development priorities;

Affirmation of the basic rights of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the timing of births and number of their children to have the information and education needed in order to make informed choices, and to have means to act on their decisions, as underscored in the ICPD Programme of Action;

Recognizes that social and economic development influences population dynamics and that population factors in turn affect social and economic development. Therefore, the policy is conceived to complement, and not to substitute, other development policies and frameworks;

Recognizes that all people and communities have fundamental rights and equal access to opportunities. In this regard, population and development programmes should address the huge inequalities in access to information and social services that help address population issues, including family planning and education;

Recognizes the need to assist couples and individuals fully meet their sexual and reproductive health rights and goals, with particular emphasis on male involvement in meeting women and their own reproductive health needs;

Recognizes the need to promote to the fullest extent the health, well being and human potential of all children and young people who constitute the nation's future stock of human resource, and that their skills should be put to effective use through productive employment;

Recognizes that the economy of Malawi largely depends on the country's natural resources and the need to develop strategies that use resources in an efficient and sustainable manner.

## **1.5 Key Challenges and Barriers**

Some challenges and barriers are anticipated in the course of implementation of this policy. Key among them is lack of adequate financial resources, given that population programmes require substantial amount of resources for effective implementation. In this regard, the Government will increase its own

budgetary and logistical contribution to population programmes, and it will mobilize increased financial and technical assistance from development partners, the private sector and civil society organizations.

Human resource capacity limitations also pose a risk to planning and implementation. The government will ensure that all key positions related to population and development programmes at national and district levels are filled for smooth implementation of population programmes. The government will also review current institutional arrangements and capacity for coordination of population and reproductive health programmes and address shortcomings in order to make them more effective in discharging their roles.

## **SECTION TWO**

### **POLICY DIRECTION**

#### **2.0 Vision**

To have manageable population growth, structure, and distribution that are commensurate with the country's resources for sustainable development.

#### **2.1 Mission**

To promote advocacy, research and integration of population issues in development planning in order to contribute towards the establishment of a society that provides a high and equitable quality of life for all Malawians.

#### **2.2 Policy Goal**

The overall goal of the National Population Policy is to contribute to the improvement of the standard of living and quality of life of the people of Malawi. The policy will provide a framework to enhance prioritization, coordination, and implementation of programmes for addressing population and development challenges, with particular focus on rapid population growth, at national and sub-national levels.

#### **2.3 Policy Outcomes**

The main policy outcomes are:

- Increased awareness and prioritization of population dynamics at all levels of development planning and programming;
- Reduced fertility and mortality levels;
- Slowed population growth and reduced child dependency burden;
- Enhanced urban planning and role of urbanization in the development process;
- Enhanced empowerment of women and gender equity; and
- Enhanced capacity to meet the needs of the population while preserving natural resources and the environment.

#### **2.4 Objectives**

The specific objectives of the policy are to:

- Advance the development and implementation of effective population and development programmes;
- Enhance scale up of health and social services that help address population challenges, particularly family planning, education, and general empowerment of youth and women;
- Enhance awareness of the linkages between population and development;
- Augment the coordination among various stakeholders and programmes in population and development;
- Promote prioritization and mainstreaming of population issues, including family planning, in development planning; and
- Advance the availability and use of data for population and development planning.

## **SECTION 3**

### **POLICY PRIORITY AREAS**

The National Population Policy aims at contributing to the quality of life of the people of Malawi. The policy will provide a framework for enhancing prioritization, implementation, and coordination of programmes for addressing population and development challenges at national and district levels. The policy will primarily focus on accelerating fertility decline and slowing down the country's unsustainably high rate of population growth through voluntary and quality family planning services. The policy will also support broader interventions in developing its youthful population into a valuable resource for socioeconomic development through investments in education, innovation and entrepreneurial skill development, youth friendly reproductive and health services, and delayed entry into marriage and parenthood. The policy will promote integrated responses to addressing population issues and other core development challenges, including climate change, management of natural resources and environmental preservation, and general empowerment of women. To achieve these objectives, the policy is built around the following four thematic priorities that have consolidated its vision, mission and guiding principles:

- Advocacy, Information, Education and Communication (IEC) and Behaviour Change Communication;
- Coordination of Population Programmes and Capacity Building;
- Research, Data Collection, Analysis and Dissemination; and
- Mainstreaming of Population and Related Issues in Development Planning

It is envisaged that interventions in the above thematic areas will contribute to the socio-economic development of Malawi by addressing various challenges in population and development.

#### **3.1 Policy Priority Area 1: Advocacy, Information, Education and Communication (IEC) and Behaviour Change Communication**

##### **Policy Statement**

Advocacy, IEC and behaviour change communication are crucial in raising awareness and behaviour change on key population and development issues such as the small family norm, family planning, the value of keeping girls in school, as well as enhancing the understanding of the link between population and development. Interventions in this programme area will target political, traditional, religious and other community leaders, as well as community members. The aim is to enhance awareness of the benefits of having fewer children for family and national wellbeing, and to address

concerns and negative attitudes towards use of modern family planning. The priority area will also focus on educating leaders and community members on the value of keeping children in school at least to secondary level, delaying entry into marriage and parenthood, especially for girls. Information underlying these educational and advocacy campaigns should be evidence-based and responsive to cultural, religious and socio-economic needs of the people.

### **3.1.1 Policy Area 1: Goal**

To enhance advocacy, IEC, and behaviour change communication on population and development issues.

### **3.1.2 Policy Area 1: Specific Objective 1**

To enhance awareness on the linkage between population issues, the environment, and socio-economic development among traditional, religious, and civil society leaders, and community members through advocacy and IEC.

### **3.1.3 Policy Area 1: Specific Objective 2**

To promote the benefits of having few children through behaviour change communication

### **3.1.4 Policy Area 1: Specific Objective 3**

To address cultural, religious, and other barriers of demand, access and use of family planning, including enhancing male involvement in reproductive health, enhancing the role of community members in IEC and distribution of contraceptives, and improving family planning commodity security.

### **3.1.5 Policy Area 1: Specific Objective 4**

Promote comprehensive empowerment of young people through education, entrepreneurial skill development, provision of youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health information and services, and addressing harmful traditional practices, including early marriage.

### **3.1.5 Policy Area 1: Specific Objective 5**

Enhance the role of national and local traditional, religious, and political leaders in championing population issues among Malawians.

## **3.2 Policy Priority Area 2: Coordination of Population Programmes and Capacity Building**

### **Policy Statement**

There are multiple partners implementing various aspects of population and development programmes, which leads to duplication of efforts and inefficient use of resources. The National Population Policy will enhance coordination of partners and implementation of population and development activities by various stakeholders in order to optimize use of resources and ensure strategic and multi-sectoral partnerships in addressing the issues.

### **3.2.1 Policy Area 2: Goal**

To enhance coordination of population and development programmes and technical capacity at national, district, community and sectoral levels.

### **3.2.2 Policy Area 2: Specific Objective 1**

To review and strengthen the institutional capacities, effectiveness and sustainability of current coordination mechanisms for population and reproductive health programmes.

### **3.2.3 Policy Area 2: Specific Objective 2**

To strengthen collaboration and networking among stakeholders and implementing partners in population programmes, including formation and enhancement of accountability mechanisms for the NPP and its implementation strategies.

## **3.3 Policy Priority Area 3: Data Collection, Analysis and Dissemination**

### **Policy Statement**

Data and research evidence play a valuable role in guiding policy makers, planners, other decision makers, and implementers in coming up with evidence-based policies and programmes that respond to people's needs. The National Population Policy will enhance resource mobilization for and capacities of local institutions and experts in collection, analysis, interpretation, dissemination, and use of data and evidence at national and district levels.

### **3.3.1 Policy Area 3: Goal**

Enhance generation, dissemination, and use of socio-economic data and related evidence for planning, monitoring and evaluation of programmes at national and district levels.

### **3.3.2 Policy Area 3: Specific Objective 1**

Improve collection, analysis, and dissemination of demographic and socio-economic data, disaggregated by age, sex, districts, traditional authority, and key socioeconomic groups.

### **3.3.3 Policy Area 3: Specific Objective 2**

Enhance dissemination and use of data and related evidence among various stakeholders in holding policy makers, decision makers and programme implementers accountable for their roles in population and development

## **3.4 Policy Priority Area 4: Mainstreaming of Population and Related Issues in Development Planning**

### **Policy Statement**

People are a major resource for and beneficiaries of the development process, and population and development issues are interdependent. Hence, it is important that broader development plans and relevant sectoral policies and programmes take into account population dynamics to ensure that they are people centred and foster multi-sectoral responses to addressing population challenges. This priority area will foster integration of Population issues

including family planning, youth development and empowerment, ageing and the elderly in Development Planning.

#### **3.4.1 Policy Area 4: Goal**

Promote Integration of Population Issues, including family planning, empowerment of youth and women ageing and the elderly in Development Planning in Development Planning (IPDP).

#### **3.4.2 Policy Area 4: Specific Objective 1**

Ensure that broader and development and sectoral planning incorporates demographic data and population issues.

#### **3.4.3 Policy Area 4: Specific Objective 2**

Ensure that other development sectors integrate population interventions in their work in order to optimize synergies and value for money at programme implementation level.

#### **3.4.4 Policy Area 4: Specific Objective 3**

Advocate for increased political commitment, prioritization, and investment in population programmes, particularly repositioning of family planning as a valuable catalyst for sustainable human capital and economic development and key facilitator for enabling Malawi enhance prosperity of its people through the Demographic Dividend.

## SECTION 4

### INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND STRATEGIES FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

#### 4.1 Institutional Arrangements

There are many institutions that are involved in the implementation of population related programmes in Malawi. Below is the detailed institutional arrangement of the implementation of this policy.

##### **Parliamentary Committee on Health and Population**

The Parliamentary Committee on Health and Population will be responsible for:

- Advocating for the implementation of the policy;
- Providing support and advice on the implementation of the policy;
- Lobbying for budget allocation for implementation of all population programmes and activities; and
- Lobbying for the review and enactment of policies, laws and guidelines that facilitates the implementation of the policy.

##### **Ministry of Economic Planning and Development**

In its capacity as the coordinating agency for the implementation of the population policy, the responsibilities of the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development are to:

- Coordinate the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Population Policy in all sectors;
- Provide direction, guidance, advice and support to agencies within and outside government, including local authorities, that are involved in the implementation of population and development policy;
- Mobilize resources from both internal and external sources for population and development related programmes such as research and training; and
- Enhance advocacy in facilitating effective and efficient implementation of the Population Policy.

##### **Ministry of Information**

The Ministry of Information will be responsible for reaching out to communities with messages on population and development issues. This will be done through advocacy and IEC activities.

##### **Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security**

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security will be responsible for mainstreaming of messages on population and development issues to communities through frontline workers. The messages will include linkages between population, food security, and preservation of agricultural land.

### **Ministry of Health**

The Ministry of Health will ensure supply of quality and affordable family planning services to slow population growth. They will also be responsible for provision of comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health services in health facilities and through outreach interventions within communities and in partnership with private service providers. Key priorities for the Ministry of Health will be to ensure improved quality and outreach of contraceptive services through expanded contraceptive choice, effective supply chain management, and overall family planning commodity security, among other strategies.

### **Ministry of Education**

The Ministry of Education will be responsible for providing population and sexuality education to young people in schools. They will contribute to efforts to ensure enrolment and retention of girls in schools, thus preventing early marriage and teenage pregnancies. The Ministry will also contribute to building the innovation, leadership, vocational and entrepreneurial skills of young people, which will be key in unleashing the role of population as a key asset for socioeconomic development.

### **Ministry of Gender**

The Ministry of gender will promote empowerment of women and gender equality, which is central in enabling women to have the autonomy to negotiate for reproductive health services, including family planning, within marital unions and relationships. The Ministry will also contribute to addressing patriarchal practices (such as limitations on ownership of land for women) that undermine the status of women and their contribution to national development.

### **Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Management**

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Management will advocate for sound management of the environment and natural resources, to ensure that the impact of rapid population growth on the environment is mitigated. The Ministry will also ensure that climate change adaptation and mitigation programmes incorporate population dynamics and contribute to addressing population challenges such as high population growth.

### **Ministry of Youth and Sports**

The Ministry of Youth and Sports will implement youth development and empowerment programmes to ensure that all the youth in the country become self reliant and empowered to take part in the development process of the country. The Ministry will also contribute to addressing sexual and reproductive health challenges and culture-based youth development barriers that young people face.

### **Other Government Institutions, Ministries and Departments**

All government departments and institutions are responsible for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the population policy issues that relate to their sectors. To ensure sustainable development, the sectors are expected to integrate population variables (fertility, mortality and migration) into their development planning.

### **Development and Cooperating Partners**

The role of development and cooperating partners will be to assist across the board with financial and technical resources in implementing the NPP. In doing so, they will be expected to support and align their activities in line with the policy's priorities.

### **Private Sector**

This policy recognizes the role of the private sector in improving the living standards and quality of life of the people of Malawi. The role of the private sector is to invest in both economic and social sectors to generate economic growth and create wealth. In this context, the private sector is expected to take up opportunities outlined in the MGDS and in the NPP. The scope of the private sector participation will be widened to involve them in the provision of other goods and services through public-private partnerships. The private sector will also be expected to play a key role in generating jobs for the labour force surplus that will result from sustained declines in fertility and mortality. The Government will support the private sector and provide an enabling environment for them to play this role effectively.

### **Academia and Research Institutions**

Population and development research forms an integral part of development planning. In this regard, academic and research institutions will be responsible for carrying out population research, to identify key issues and trends in population and development to inform programming. Research should pay particular attention to providing evidence on integrated and cost-effective interventions that will facilitate realization of the policy's goals and objectives.

### **Faith Based Organisations, Non Governmental Organisations and Civil Society**

The role of Faith Based Organisations (FBOs), Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and the Civil Society in the implementation of the policy is to implement specific activities in various sectors and to complement government's oversight and accountability functions in order to safeguard the interests of Malawians. Government will continue working with these institutions and support their work in the implementation of the NPP. Civil society organizations will play a particularly critical accountability role in ensuring that the implementation of the NPP upholds the human rights principles underlying the NPP and the ICPD Programme of Action.

### **Traditional Leaders and community members**

The policy recognizes the important role that active participation of traditional leaders such as chiefs and communities at large play in implementation of development programmes at grassroots level. The policy will foster empowerment of traditional leaders to operate as champions of family planning; school enrolment, retention, and progression; reform or eradication of harmful traditional practices such as early marriage, and other population programmes. Community members will also enhance implementation of the policy through their active participation in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. In particular, the policy will enhance the direct role of community members in enhancing IEC campaigns on the small-family

norm and delivery of family planning and other reproductive health services within communities.

## **4.2 Implementation**

Implementation of the NPP will be guided by the National Population Plan of Action (NPP PoA), which will be reviewed every five years. The NPP PoA will operationalize the broad policy guidelines in the NPP and related sectoral policies into specific strategies and interventions that will be implemented to realize the NPP's objectives. The NPP PoA will be developed through wide consultation with all key stakeholders in population and development. Being a multi-sectoral policy, its implementation will involve all government institutions, Private Sector, NGOs, FBOs, the Civil Society, academic/research institutions and the community. The implementation plan will take account of the devolved administrative system and ensure availability of strong advocacy, planning, and implementation capacity at district and sub-district governance units. The national policy will provide a broad framework for contextualization and incorporation of population issues in district development plans and strategies.

## **4.3 Monitoring and Evaluation**

The National Population Policy Plan of Action will contain a monitoring and evaluation plan for the NPP. System effectiveness and impact indicators will be developed to help in tracking progress in the implementation of the policy. The monitoring and evaluation indicators will align with the monitoring and evaluation master plan envisaged in the MGDS II.

The Ministry of Economic Planning and Development will coordinate the monitoring and evaluation process of the NPP, ensuring that the implementation of the policy is geared towards achieving measurable outcomes and impacts. Collection, analysis, and translation of data will be prioritized and constant feedback given by various stakeholders to ensure that the Policy objectives are achieved and revised as new challenges and opportunities emerge. The National Statistical Office (NSO) and other relevant institutions will continue to provide the necessary data for monitoring and planning purposes. All stakeholders will be responsible for monitoring and evaluation of the NPP activities in their sectors based on the NPP PoA and its monitoring and evaluation framework.

The NPP will be reviewed every five years to ensure that its objectives are being achieved and emerging issues accommodated in subsequent implementation plans. Since the government is committed to implementing the policy in accordance with international development frameworks such as the ICPD Programme of Action and MDGs, the policy will be reviewed accordingly when major modifications are made to these frameworks. Annual coordination and review meetings will be organized for all the stakeholders to share experiences in the implementation of the policy. Annual progress reports from the stakeholders will form the basis for review and monitoring the policy. This will help in re-strategizing the implementation of the policy to ensure that its objectives are achieved.

## GLOSSARY OF SELECTED TERMS

- 1 **Annual Population Growth Rate:** is the rate at which a population is increasing (or decreasing) in a given year due to the contribution of natural increase and net migration, expressed as percentage of the base population.
- 2 **Contraceptive Prevalence Rate:** is the proportion of currently married women aged 15-49 years who are currently using a method of family planning at the time of the survey.
- 3 **Demographic Dividend:** is the economic benefit that arises from a significant increase in the ratio of working-aged adults relative to young and old dependents due to sustained decline in fertility and mortality. The surplus labour force can accelerate economic growth through increased productivity, greater household savings, and lower costs for basic social services provided to a young population.
- 4 **HIV Prevalence Rate:** is the number of persons diagnosed with HIV at a given point in time per total number of persons in the reference population.
- 5 **Infant Mortality Rate:** refers to the number of deaths to infants under one year of age per 1,000 live births in a given year.
- 6 **Labour Force:** is a total number of persons aged 15 years and above, including those employed and unemployed.
- 7 **Labour Force Participation Rate/ Economic Activity Rate:** is the percentage of persons that are economically active out of all persons aged 15 years and above (the working age population)
- 8 **Literacy Rate:** refers to the proportion of the population able to read and write as a percentage of the total mid year population.
- 9 **Life Expectancy at Birth:** is the average number of years a newborn child would be expected to live if the child is subject to the age pattern of mortality prevailing at the time of its birth.
- 10 **Maternal Mortality:** is the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management, but not from accidental or incidental causes.
- 11 **Maternal Mortality Ratio:** is the number of women who die as a result of pregnancy and childbearing in a given year per 100,000 live births.

- 12 **Neonatal Mortality Rate:** is the number of infant deaths up to 28 days after delivery per 1,000 live births.
- 13 **Net Enrolment Ratio:** The number of children of official primary school age who are enrolled in primary education as a percentage of the total children of the official school age population.
- 14 **Population Density:** The number of people per square kilometer of land.
- 15 **Population Momentum:** The tendency of populations to continue growing after fertility reaches replacement level (estimated to be 2.1 births per woman) because of the large numbers of young people who are yet to start bearing children.
- 16 **Replacement Level-Fertility:** This is the level of fertility at which women are, on the average, having only enough children to replace themselves and their partners in the population. This level of fertility is estimated at 2.1 births per woman.
- 17 **Total Fertility Rate (TFR):** is the total number of children a woman would have by the end of her reproductive period if she experienced the prevailing age-specific fertility rates throughout her childbearing life.
- 18 **Under-five Mortality Rate:** is the number of deaths of children under five years of age per 1,000 live births in a given a year.
- 19 **Urbanization:** is the number of people living in urban areas measured as a percentage of the total population.
- 20 **Urbanization Rate:** is the increase in the urban population at a given period of time measure as a percentage.