

OPENING STATEMENT

BY THE

**MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE AND FOOD
SECURITY**

HONOURABLE PROF. PETER MWANZA

**AT THE NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS' VALIDATION
WORKSHOP ON THE REVISED SECOND EDITION
OF THE NATIONAL FISHERIES POLICY 2012-2017**

HELD AT GOLDEN PEACOCK HOTEL, LILONGWE

14TH DECEMBER, 2012

The Director of Ceremonies – Mr. Michel M'mangisa
The Deputy Director of Fisheries – Dr. Steve Donda
The Director of Economic Planning – Mr. Yona Kamphale
The Assistant Res Rep for UNDP
All Directors from various institutions
Ladies and Gentlemen

I feel greatly honoured to be part and parcel of this important event when I will officially open this session of validating the revised Second Edition of the National Fisheries Policy, 2012-2017.

- **Background to Policy Review**

Let me first highlight the background leading to the review process. Ladies and gentlemen, as all of you might be aware, the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy was approved in 2001 and has since not been reviewed. In addition, in recent times there have been policy shifts from natural resources conservation and management to promoting sustainable production of fish for food security and income generation. Some of the emerging issues that have not been taken into consideration include governance, marketing, fish quality, environmental issues as well as child labour.

Ladies and gentlemen it is well understood that sustainable management of fisheries resources and development of aquaculture requires proper policy guidance both at national and local levels. Consideration of policy issues for sustainable management of natural resources and environment at international, regional and national levels also provide an informed choice for a sound fisheries management policy framework. It is against this background that a revised Policy for the fisheries sector for the next 5 years is necessary in line with the overarching development objectives on food security and economic growth as outlined in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) II, the Economic Recovery Plan (ERP) and the Agriculture Sector Wide Approach (ASWAp) Framework.

- **Importance of the Fisheries Sector**

Ladies and Gentlemen it is paramount to reflect on the importance of the Fisheries Sector in the country. As you are aware, the fisheries sector is composed of capture fisheries, aquaculture and aquarium trade sub-sectors. Each of these sub-sectors contributes differently to the national economy. The Fisheries sector has continued to be one of the major source of employment. During the year, 2012 it has directly employed nearly 65,000 fishers and indirectly over 500,000 people who are involved in fish processing, fish marketing, boat building and engine repair.

Furthermore, the fish industry supports nearly 1.6 million people in lakeshore communities and makes substantial contributions to their livelihoods, by supporting approximately 9%, 18%, 15%, 9% and 30%, of the people in Karonga, Nkhata Bay, Nkhotakota, Salima and Mangochi, respectively. Furthermore, 13% of the people in Zomba, Machinga and Phalombe districts, as well as 6% of the people in the Lower Shire Valley derive their livelihood from fishing.

The Fisheries Sector contribution to food and nutrition security has continued to be paramount. Fish provides over 70% of the dietary animal protein intake of Malawians and 40% of the total protein supply. It also provides vital vitamins, minerals and micronutrients. Much of the fish is consumed in rural areas thereby contributing significantly to daily nutritional requirements to some of the vulnerable groups such as HIV/AIDS victims, orphans and the poor

In terms of fish exports, Lake Malawi has over 800 endemic fish species which are of both local and international scholarly importance and also act as a source of tourism attraction. Some fish species such as Mbuna are exported outside the country and this helps to bring much-needed foreign exchange. The total exports of aquarium fish and some dried fish products for 2011 amounted to 66,479kg generating revenue of MK70,617,625 (USD 451,148)

Ladies and Gentlemen the sector is also playing a positive role in contributing to the household income and national GDP. Fish landings amounting to 81,072 tonnes in 2011 had a beach or landed value of MK18.96 billion (approx USD 71.5 million) and contributed to the national GDP. The national average beach price was at MK230 per kilogram. All this illustrates how important is the fisheries sector to national development agenda.

- **What are the major challenges facing the sector requiring attention**

Ladies and Gentlemen, though there is significant contribution of the sector to the national economy, there are a number of challenges which the current policy is expected to overcome. There is localized overfishing of fish stocks mainly from the shallower margins of Southern Lake Malawi, and intensely fished water bodies such as Lake Malombe due to excessive fishing effort. The decline of the most valuable species, such as Chambo (*Oreochromis spp*) has been significant, and fishers' earnings have subsequently been reduced. This has created hardships for those fishers who are restricted to fishing in these shallow areas due to financial and geographic constraints, as most have little or no other livelihood alternatives. Although it is known that there is a large underexploited offshore resource in Lake Malawi estimated at 33,000 tonnes of Ndunduma (*Diplotaxodon spp.*) that fishers

can sustainably exploit, there is lack of appropriate technology to tap these resources.

Similarly, fish harvests from aquaculture have remained low estimated at 2,600 tons per year produced by over 6,000 small scale fish farmers countrywide. The development of aquaculture in Malawi is constrained by three key challenges namely: limited availability of quality fingerlings, poor feed and low participation of large scale investors. While there are a few hatcheries producing fingerlings, the quality produced is of low standard and uncertified. In terms of fish feed, there are no commercial producers.

As for aquarium trade its focus mainly involves exploitation of Mbuna fish for export. Mbuna fish are part of the rich biodiversity of Lake Malawi that also attract tourism. Of particular concern regarding Mbuna fish trade are certification issues and development of a value chain for the fish.

In terms of fish processing and marketing, the common methods that are employed for fish processing include sun-drying, smoking, para-boiling and pan-roasting. Rarely fish would be iced and if this is only practiced by industrial fishery that targets the town markets. There is very little value adding in the fish industry. Hence, there are no formal fish exports due to absence of proper handling and processing facilities as required by highly regulated markets. Generally, there is an urgent need

to address public services and infrastructure issues along the whole fish value chain.

- **What is the current policy goal and its focus**

Ladies and Gentlemen, while noting various challenges facing the fisheries sector, the current revised Policy focuses on increasing sustainable fish production from capture fisheries and aquaculture, enhancing fish quality and value addition for domestic and export trade to create wealth, promoting technology development and its transfer to the users, enhancing capacity for the sector's development and promoting social development, decent employment and fisheries governance through participatory resource management regimes. These are key priority areas for consideration within the next five years

In this revised policy, the main goal is to increase fish supply in the country. It is expected that per capita fish consumption should increase from 5.6 kg in 2012 to 8 kg by 2017. Subsequently, this calls for an increased annual fish supply from capture fisheries from 98,000 tonnes in 2011 to 110,000 tonnes by 2017 and from aquaculture from 3,000 tonnes in 2012 to 10,000 tonnes by 2017. This assumes a population growth rate of 2.8%. Based on the same trends by 2030 fish supply from aquaculture investments will increase by 50,000 tonnes. This will provide an annual surplus of over 20,000 tonnes.

With increased fish production from both capture fisheries and aquaculture coupled with added value initiatives, it is expected that fish exports will also increase by focusing on targeted markets that will include both high and low value fish products mainly destined for the regional market. By 2017, annual fish exports will increase to 3,000 tonnes from the current levels of 500 tonnes.

- **Expected Policy Outcomes**

Ladies and Gentlemen, when the policy is fully implemented, it is expected that the following outcomes would be achieved:

- (i) Enhanced capacity to sustainably manage and develop fisheries and aquaculture in Malawi;
- (ii) Improved protein and micronutrients intake for Malawians;
- (iii) Increased decent employment opportunities, including outside the fisheries sector; and
- (iv) Increased earnings for people and government from fish exports and domestic trade;

Enhancement of social development and decent employment in small-scale fisheries, as well as promotion of gender equality in the small-scale fishing communities, are key for both the improvement of livelihoods and the socio-economic sustainability of the small-scale fisheries sector.

Therefore, increased attention to social and economic development (health, education, organisational development, social protection mechanisms, decent employment and diversification of income, gender equality) is needed to ensure that small-scale fishing communities and their members are socially and economically empowered.

- **Implementation arrangements of the Policy**

The national fisheries machinery, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, shall work in close collaboration with the other stakeholders in conserving and managing fisheries resources. Where necessary, the Ministry may enter into agreement with other public organisations, communities, the private sector, and NGOs on specific conservation and management issues. The Policy also promotes co-ordination and collaboration with other sectors in dealing with multi-sectoral issues, which have an impact on the environment and fishery resources. Additionally, international cooperation is required to carry out many of the activities proposed. Many international treaties and protocols cover the various policy themes, and transboundary concerns affect Lake Malawi particularly. This will ensure that efforts to resolve interrelated, causative issues involved in the multiple uses of aquatic and water resources and in the management of fisheries resources are not fragmented, overlapping and ineffective.

In addition, Ladies and Gentlemen, the implementation of the National Fisheries Policy requires an effective monitoring and evaluation system with appropriate and efficient feedback mechanism. This entails carrying out monitoring and evaluation functions at all levels and gathering data and information at national, sectoral and local levels. To establish internal self-monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, an institutionalised framework as outlined in the Policy Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy (PIMES) has been developed and will be adopted at all stages of planning and programming. The Policy will be reviewed based on a five-year cycle as established in the policy formulation process. However, this Policy or parts of it may be reviewed if there are significant changes in the operating environment in the course of its implementation.

- **Acknowledgements and Way forward**

At this point in time Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to express my sincere thanks to all people who have contributed to the preparation of this Policy throughout the extensive consultation process. In particular, I express my gratitude to the European Union funded ACP II Fish Project and the United Nations Development Programme and United Nations Programme through the Poverty and Environment Initiative Project for providing technical and financial support to the process, making this a worthwhile and useful document. To the stakeholders including fishers and fish farmers, the

private sector, academia and the cooperating partners, I urge you to implement the recommendations contained herein for sustainable management of the fisheries resources and development of aquaculture in Malawi.

With these remarks I declare this national validation workshop on the Fisheries Policy officially opened and wish you fruitful deliberations

I thank you for your attention and May God Bless Our Nation.