

# **WOMEN INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION**

**LESSONS FROM MALAWI**

# COUNTRY PROFILE

Malawi is a landlocked country in Southern Africa

Bordered by Tanzania, Mozambique and Zambia

Total area of 118,484 sq. km

Population estimated at 18.6 million of which 52% are women and girls

About 85% of the population lives in rural areas

# ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Malawi agro-based economy

Agriculture accounts for about one-third of GDP and 80 % of export revenue,

Main source of livelihoods for 71 percent of the rural population

Employs 85 % of labour force

# **CHALLENGES AFFECTING WOMEN INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION**

Persistent unequal power relations between men and women, boys and girls due to gender stereotyping;

Huge disparities in access, benefit, opportunity and control over resources such as land and credit

Increasing cases of gender-based violence;

High illiteracy level among women

# **CHALLENGES AFFECTING WOMEN INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION**

High incidence of poverty in female headed households

Limited participation and representation of women in decision-making processes at all levels;

Limited gender mainstreaming capacities across all sectors;

Lack of institutional capacity to effectively implement gender initiatives.

# **ACTIONS TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES**

Creating a conducive policy and legislative environment

Strengthening institutional capacity on inclusion and participation of women

Improving access to credit and financial resources

Promoting participation of women in politics and leadership positions

Promoting girls and women education

Mainstreaming gender equality in national and sector development strategies

# **POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENT**

National Gender Policy

Ratified a number of regional and international legal instruments

Gender Equality Act

Prevention of Domestic Violence Act;

Deceased Estates Act

Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act;

Trafficking in Persons Act

Child Care, Protection and Justice Act

# **STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY ON INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN**

Put in place a specific Ministry responsible for Gender Equality and Economic Empowerment of Women

Established Gender Focal Points in Ministries, Departments and Districts

Training Government Officers in gender mainstreaming and budgeting

# **PARTNERING WITH POLITICAL AND LOCAL LEADERSHIP**

Promoting the HE for She campaign

Working with Traditional Leaders and Community Action Groups as champions of change.

Targeting the family to promote gender equality

Partnering with the media to champion gender equality

Establishment of Victim Support Unit in Police Posts

Improving accessibility of Legal Aid Services by establishing regional and district offices

# **PROMOTING PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICS AND LEADERSHIP POSITIONS**

Promoting and supporting the 50:50

Building capacity of female Members of Parliament

Promoting gender sensitive IEC materials for civic voter education.

Training ward councillors in gender responsive political leadership at local levels.

Seeking political parties commitment on gender equality and participation of women in politics

Improved Coordination in mobilization of resources for participation of women in politics

# **PROMOTING GIRLS AND WOMEN EDUCATION**

Put in place the re-admission policy aimed at reintegration of teenage mothers into the formal school system

Scaling up school feeding programmes to improve enrollment

Providing boarding school facilities for girls

Promoting reduction of teenage pregnancies and combating child marriages

Removed tuition fees for primary and secondary education

# **PROMOTION OF GIRLS AND WOMEN EDUCATION**

Increased national budget allocated to education

Improving sanitary facilities in schools

Establishing teacher councillors to address school related violence against girls;

Linking community victim support units with health centres.

Establishing Child Protection Committees and Mother Groups at schools to address school related violence against girls;

# **PROMOTION OF GIRLS AND WOMEN EDUCATION**

Recruitment of more female teachers

Promoting early childhood development education

Introduced secondary school selection policy of 50:50

Affirmative selection policy for girls and women into university

Reserving at least 30% of university bed space for women and girls

Elimination of gender stereotypes through the change of curriculum

Promoting adult literacy education

# **MAINSTREAMING GENDER EQUALITY IN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES**

Malawi Vision 2020 stipulates equal opportunities for all and active participation by all

Malawi's medium term development national strategy prioritizes inclusion and participation of women for sustainable development

Mainstreaming gender in sector and local councils development plans

Training of Planning and Budget Officers on Gender Sensitive Budgeting

# **PROMOTING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES**

Training of girls and women in non traditional science fields and non traditional jobs such as the army

Encouraging young boys and men to go into non traditional profession such as nursing and midwifery

Promotion of girls and women role models and recognition of women achievers

Provision of 90 days of maternity leave to employed women

Developed gender sensitive guidelines on new recruitment, promotion and deployment of staff

# **IMPROVING ACCESS TO CREDIT AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

Training women in business management and entrepreneurship skills

Increasing banking services to rural areas and linking women to lending institutions and credit facilities

Establishing collateral funding for women entrepreneurs

Promoting Village Savings, Loan and Microfinance Schemes targeting women

Scaling up Social Cash Transfer Programmes for the ultra poor and labour constrained household

Scaling up Public Works Programme targeting women

# **CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD**

Government of Malawi realizes that ending women's poverty will sustainably and significantly reduce extreme poverty

Advancing equal opportunity and removing structural barriers to women's economic empowerment will reduce inequality and spur inclusive growth

Inclusion and participation of women in socioeconomic activities is progress for all

And as such Government is committed to gender equality and promoting inclusion and participation of women at all levels