



Transparency, Accountability and Ethics in Public Institutions in Malawi

Presented by Hon. Grace Malera
Ombudsman Malawi

Presentation Outline



- Key Questions
- Introduction and Background
- The Office of the Ombudsman
- Malawi Office of the Ombudsman and UN DESA – Collaboration
- How International Good Practice inspiring actions at national level
- Way forward
- Conclusion

KEY QUESTIONS

- How international good practices inspire actions at the national level
- How UN DESA assistance is contributing to strengthening public institutions in facilitating more coherent implementation of SDGs

Introduction & Background



- Malawi is a UN member state and obliged to achieve the targets in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Implementation of the SGDs as well as other national development goals is hampered by many challenges including increased rates of corruption and poverty.
- Fahad Hassan (Former Attorney General, 2003) observed that 30% of Malawi's national budget is lost through
- Justice Razine Mzikamanda (2013 – serving as Anti- Corruption Bureau Director General) made similar observation - most of the African countries, including Malawi, lose 30% of their budget money to corruption.
- Recent World Bank report (Malawi: Poverty Assessment Report, 2022) has revealed that half of the population lives in poverty.

Intro Conti.....



- These worsening statistics on corruption and poverty affects Malawi's efforts of attaining sustainable development. SDG goals number 1, 2, 10 and 16 affected
- Corruption results in making public service unreliable and unresponsive to the needs of the public.
- To mitigate all of these challenges, Malawi has a new overarching development plan/policy - Malawi2063 which aligns with the SDGs particularly on
 - eradication of poverty
 - eradication of all forms of inequality and
 - ending corruption by making Malawi a corrupt free society through strengthening of oversight institutions.

The Office of the Ombudsman

- The office of the Ombudsman is one governance and accountability oversight institution in Malawi

- Established by the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi under section 123
- Mandated to investigate **ANY AND ALL** cases where it appears that a person has suffered injustice – promoting transparency, accountability and ethics in public institutions
- The injustices including manifest injustice, unfair treatment, unfair conduct, abuse of power or any conduct which would be regarded as oppressive or unfair in an open and democratic society, Ombudsman Act section 5 (1).
- An act or omission which is unreasonable, unjust or unfair, or is based on any practice which may be deemed as such, Ombudsman Act section 5 (2) a.
- Exercise of power, duty or authority in a manner which is unreasonable, unjust or unfair, Ombudsman Act section 5 (2) b.
- The Ombudsman focuses on complaints on acts of maladministration perpetrated by public officers and public offices, and also carries out systemic investigations on maladministration in public services delivery

Malawi Office of the Ombudsman – UN DESA Collaboration

- The Malawi Office of the Ombudsman partnered with UN DESA in a capacity building drive
- Organised a 3-days National Training Workshop on “*Transparency, Accountability and Ethics in Public Institutions*”, from the 2nd to 4th August, 2022, in Lilongwe, Malawi
- Workshop drew participants of senior government officials who will work to champion institutionalisation of ethics in their sectors/institutions – Work Plans produced
- The Workshop was based on UNDESA’s *Curriculum on Governance for the Sustainable Development Goals*, which aims to promote a critical understanding of sustainable development issues, enhance governance capacity, and strengthen public servants’ awareness of their active role in contributing to the achievement of the Malawi 2063 and the SDGs.

How international good practices inspiring actions at the national level



-
- Inclusion of ethics in Malawi's education curriculum which is being spearheaded by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB). Presently at advanced stage.
 - Institutionalizing ethics in all public institutions as part of public sector reforms through the Office of the Ombudsman- The Office of the President and Cabinet assigned the responsibility of championing the institutionalisation of ethics and integrity in public institutions to the Office of the Ombudsman-
 - Provision of independent oversight and holding accountable duty bearers – through investigations and inquiries
 - Building expertise in the areas of ethics and integrity - Training of public officers to mainstream ethics and integrity in the public sector
 - Workshop with a cross-section of stakeholders in ethics and integrity
 - Setting up of Sectoral Ombudsman Platforms – piloting in the health sector
 - Promotion of ethics through complaints resolution and sensitization campaigns or initiatives



Way forward

1. Scale-up ethics and integrity mainstreaming activities at national level across the Public Service and alignment with SDGs and Malawi2063

Scale up capacity building activities on transparency, accountability and ethics across the Public Sector

Conclusion

- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development cannot be realized without transparent, accountable and ethical public institutions.
- Institutionalization of ethics is critical for good governance and attainment of the Malawi2063 Agenda
- Government of Malawi has been implementing a number of sector reforms to ensure efficient, accountable, transparent and responsive public service for the delivery of equitable and quality public service whilst aiming to be competitive globally.
- Need to scale up interventions and collaboration in strengthening of public institutions to facilitate more coherent implementation of SDGs.

The end

