



REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

STATEMENT

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY

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PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

**AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 76TH SESSION OF
THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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- ***Your Excellency Mr. Abdullah Shahid – President of the 76th Session of the General Assembly;***
- ***Your Excellency Mr. Antonio Guterres – UN Secretary-General;***
- ***Excellencies Heads of State and Government;***
- ***Ladies and Gentlemen.***

By the time I finish speaking, close to five thousand new babies will have entered our troubled world. In fact, the number of babies to be born in the 7 days of this debate is over 3 million.

Now, this new crop of humanity and billions more to come in the next 80 years, has no voice and no vote at this assembly. Yet it is they, not we, who will live in the future we create here. The task of choosing that future for them lies with us. This assembly is a fork in the road where we must choose between two futures for our children and their children.

We must choose for our children a future of zero carbon emissions; or a future of daily climate catastrophes that wipe out crops, homes, cities, and some nations in this room.

We must choose for our children a future of solidarity, hospitality, and generosity that transcend borders and national identities in times of global crisis; or a future of greed that hoards life-saving technologies, medicines, and vaccines in one hemisphere while the other hemisphere is robbed of its raw materials and left perishing.

We must choose for our children a future of peace fostered by equitable sustainable development between north and south and between east and west; or a future of conflicts triggered by the widening economic inequality between rich and poor, men and women, young and old.

We must choose for our children a future of good governance delivered through strong democratic

institutions that safeguard human rights, uphold the rule of law, and maintain world peace; or a future of corrupt and oppressive governments propped up by proxy wars between developed nations and enabled by a weak and undemocratic United Nations that serves the interests of its Security Council at the expense of its member states' development and inclusion.

The place to make that choice is here, and the time to make that choice is now. Here and now, we must move with speed and synergy to pull civilization out of this sinking wreckage. Here and now, we must silence our petty and narrow interests to give voice to our shared desire to build back better and leave no one behind. Here and now, we must answer the four crises that are before us: the climate crisis, the Covid crisis, the sustainable development crisis, and the UN Governance crisis.

*Now, the starting points for answering each of these crises are simple. For the Climate Crisis, the starting point is three words: **Fulfil Your Pledge**. It's been over ten years since the developed nations that polluted our planet the most pledged 100 billion dollars towards climate mitigation and adaptation. These are nations that tell the rest of us to follow their example, nations that tell us to consider them friends, nations that call us corrupt and untrustworthy when we say one thing and do another, nations that tell us that they are the leaders in this global village.*

*Well, it's time to show that leadership. **Fulfil Your Pledge**. Mind you, this is not a donation. This is a cleaning fee, because if you pollute the planet we all call home, it is only right that you should pay to clean it up. So **Fulfil Your Pledge**. No ifs, no buts, no ands.*

Similarly, the starting point for ending the Covid Crisis is three words: **Release the Vaccines**. It is reported that half a billion vaccine doses being kept by developed countries will expire in three months. What are you waiting for? Release the Vaccines. Release the vaccine doses and the vaccine production rights to save human lives. In most of the 46 member states of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and the 16 member states of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), both of which are chaired by Malawi, vaccination rates are below 2%. The rate would be at 0% were it not for the COVAX Facility coordinated by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) and the World Health Organization.

With such limited access to vaccines, we have had to make the most of preventive and remedial measures. In Malawi alone, we have brought

three waves of the pandemic under control without the use of lockdowns; we have constructed and staffed recovery centres in record time; we have treated Covid patients and registered a recovery rate of over 85%; we have cut infection rates down from 40% to less than 5%; we have kept the death toll from Covid below 3000; and we have facilitated monthly cash transfers to support thousands of households exposed to loss of income by the pandemic.

But in a world where the virus keeps mutating and spreading, the measures we have employed to achieve all this are not sustainable. The most effective weapon we need is the vaccine. As such, you can imagine our disappointment to be at an assembly like this, rubbing shoulders with nations that are now administering booster shots while most of our people have yet to get their first one. This form of vaccine nationalism is wrong. It

is insensitive. And it must end. Release the Vaccines.

*At the same time, to help us recover from the economic devastation caused by this pandemic, the starting point is three words: **Cancel the Debts**. This is the single most impactful thing that would help developing nations like Malawi build back better and not be left behind. We already have a Social Economic Recovery Programme for addressing the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic. But what is missing is the debt cancellation that will help us focus on recovery. The effectiveness of this approach has already been proven by the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI). So, I say again: **Cancel the Debts**.*

As for the sustainable development crisis, the starting point for progress is again three words: **Let's Work Together**. As a global community, we are off track on a number of sustainable development goals, and there is no path of progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda that does not involve working together across borders, across sectors, and across SDGs.

The need to work together on SDGs is why I was happy to host the 41st Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government in Malawi.

The need to work together on SDGs is why I was happy to host a Pre-UN Food Systems Summit for African Heads of State and Government, where we shared what we have learnt from the successful implementation of the Affordable Inputs Programme (AIP), which increased

Malawi's food production by 21% in its first season.

The need to work together on SDGs is why I was happy to address the first ever Summit for Heads of State from Africa and CariCom.

The need to work together on SDGs is why I am happy that Malawi is one of 8 nations that are Global Champions on SDG7 to achieve clean energy for all by 2030.

The need to work together on SDGs is why I am looking forward to host a Climate Conference for SADC next month, in readiness for our collaboration with other regions at the upcoming COP26 in Glasgow.

The need to work together on SDGs is why I am looking forward to meeting other LDCs for the fifth Summit of our grouping in Doha this coming January.

Let's work together, because even though my country has a ten-year implementation plan for achieving Agenda 2030 on SDGs, much of that plan cannot be done in isolation. The bottom line is, if one nation among us fails or succeeds to achieve sustainable development, so do the rest.

This need to work together brings me to the fourth and final crisis confronting us: the UN Governance Crisis. In a world that needs multilateralism more than ever to tackle the global challenges we face, the United Nations is indispensable. As such, the UN must be the gold standard of democracy, accountability,

*transparency, and equity. It is therefore our position that the starting point for creating a UN that reflects these values is three words: **Reform this institution.***

One reform urgently needed is the implementation of the African Union's Ezulwini Consensus, which demands two Permanent Seats for Africa, with Veto Power, on the UN Security Council and five Non-Permanent Seats. It is time for the United Nations to practice the democratic values it preaches. That is the UN we want for the millions of new-borns entering the troubled world we have created, because that is the UN they can trust to create a better world.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION