



SPEECH

BY

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SECRETARY FOR WATER AND
SANITATION**

DURING

**THE NATIONAL DRM SYMPOSIUM
MOUNT SOCHE HOTEL, BLANTYRE,
9TH DECEMBER, 2024**

Salutation:

- The Representative for the World Bank Country Manager, Mr. Efrem Chilima
- The Director of Resilience and Recovery, Mr. Peter Chimangeni,
- The PTC Chair for MRDRMP, Eng. James Chitete
- Directors and all Government Officials Present;
- Chief Executive Officers and District Commissioners Present;
- Traditional Authorities and Traditional Leaders Present
- The Task Team Leaders for MRDRMP, Ms. Arati Belle & Mr. Francis Nkoka

- All delegates from the Government of Mozambique
- All delegates from the Government of Sierra Leon
- All delegates from the UN Agencies
- All delegates from the Development Partners
- All delegates from the Academia
- Members of the Civil Society and the Faith Community;
- Project Coordinator for MRDRMP/MWASIP
- Members of the Press;
- The Director of Ceremonies;
- Distinguished invited guests;
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. Good morning to you all
2. My humble duty this morning is to officially open this Disaster Risk Management Symposium, but before I do so, allow me to say a few words
3. Firstly, I would like to thank you all for attending this DRM symposium
4. Your presence here is a clear testimony of commitment and dedication to Disaster Risk Management.
5. Allow me to extend a very warm welcome to all the participants to Disaster Risk Management Symposium.
6. In a special way, let me welcome all the international delegates who have joined us

for this symposium. Welcome to the Warm heart of Africa. Please feel at home.

7. The symposium has come at an opportune time when the country, is grappling with significant socio-economic challenges exacerbated by frequent climate-related shocks.
8. The country has, for the recent past years, faced various natural hazards, including flooding, droughts, cyclones, and landslides, which undermine development progress and contribute to macroeconomic instability.
9. Over the past decade, Malawi has endured severe climatic shocks, including devastating floods in 2015 and a significant drought in 2016 linked to a major El Niño event,

resulting in estimated annual losses of \$500 million—approximately a 1.7% reduction in GDP.

10. In 2023, Tropical Cyclone Freddy affected over 2.5 million people, causing over 600 fatalities, economic damage estimated at \$506.7 million and substantial agricultural losses.
11. The Shire River Basin (SRB), in Southern Malawi, has been the most affected in the country.
12. The effects have been compounded by demographic pressures and widespread poverty, with over half a million residents vulnerable to droughts and floods.

13. Addressing these interconnected issues requires concerted efforts to enhance climate resilience, improve resource management, and foster inclusive economic growth.
14. The Disaster Risk Management Act of 2023, presents opportunities for integrated approaches to disaster response, transitioning away from reactive disaster response to proactive preparedness and risk reduction, and sustainable recovery, crucial for supporting Malawi's future resilience against climate change.
15. As part of the response to the urgent need for proactive disaster management, the Malawi Resilience and Disaster Risk Management Project (MRDRMP) has been

implemented to bolster the country's capacity to withstand, manage and respond to climate-related shocks.

16. The project's objective was to support the recovery of livelihoods and infrastructure in flood and drought affected areas and strengthen capacity for flood and drought risk management.

17. This evolution has laid a solid foundation for sustainable resilience planning in Malawi.

18. This includes improved basin management, hydrometeorology, flow forecasting, early warning systems, and water conservation, with strong institutional backing for coordinated service delivery.

19. Distinguished delegates, this symposium is happening under the theme *“Resilient Malawi: Charting a path for Enhanced Disaster Risk Management”*

20. The main aim of this symposium is to showcase a series of analytical and technical studies conducted under the MRDRMP, alongside findings from other relevant initiatives.

21. These studies are intended to inform future investments and enhance government planning and operational effectiveness in disaster risk management and resilience building.

22. The symposium will serve as a platform for in-depth discussions on the results of the analytical works and technical

assistance conducted under MRDRMP and related initiatives.

23. Therefore, the specific objectives of this symposium are to:

- a) Highlight the results of the studies and their implications by emphasizing the relevance to current and future resilience strategies.
- b) Enhance action planning through discussions to facilitate the formulation of actionable recommendations for implementation of future interventions including those under the Regional Climate Resilience Project 2.
- c) Strengthen coordination and capacity of participants to enhance local and

regional capacity in disaster risk management and resilience planning.

24. Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, from this DRM symposium, we expect the following:

- i. Comprehensive dissemination and consolidation of analytical findings for the enhancement of transparency and knowledge sharing.
- ii. Development of a collaborative action plan that outlines strategic priorities and interventions necessary for advancing resilience and disaster risk management in Malawi.
- iii. Capacity strengthening to enhance the capabilities of stakeholders and

fostering a culture of resilience and proactive disaster management in the region.

iv. Contribute to the creation of dynamic communities of practice by bringing together key stakeholders and end-user, to foster dialogue, knowledge exchange, and collaborative solutions for building resilience across Malawi.

25. Distinguished delegates, these are key in the achievement of Malawi's Vision "*The Malawi 2063*" with an ambition of becoming an industrialized upper middle-income country by 2063.

26. Similarly, as a continent, we have an ambition to transform Africa into a global powerhouse.

27. Distinguished delegates, I humbly request you all to actively participate during the three days of this symposium

28. Together, *we shall map a path for Enhanced Disaster Risk Management for a resilient Malawi*

29. Distinguished delegates, with these few reflections, I now have the honor to declare this DRM symposium officially open.

I thank you for your attention, May God Bless Us all!