

PEOPLE'S SCORECARD FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Malawi, 2020



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents civil society perspectives on the status of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Malawi since their adoption in 2015. It is an analysis and evaluation of the views shared by members of the Civil Society Taskforce on SDGs in Malawi and other stakeholders operating in various sectors of development, including NGOs. The data that informed the report was generated through structured questions posed during open discussions targeting members of the Taskforce and literature review of reports developed by Government of Malawi and intergovernmental institutions. Findings from the process reveal that achievement of SDGs in Malawi is a mixed bag, with progress on some SDGs and no progress on others. While prospects are there that Malawi might achieve some of the SDGs, truth has to be told that Malawi might achieve targets of some SDGs, not an SDG in its totality.

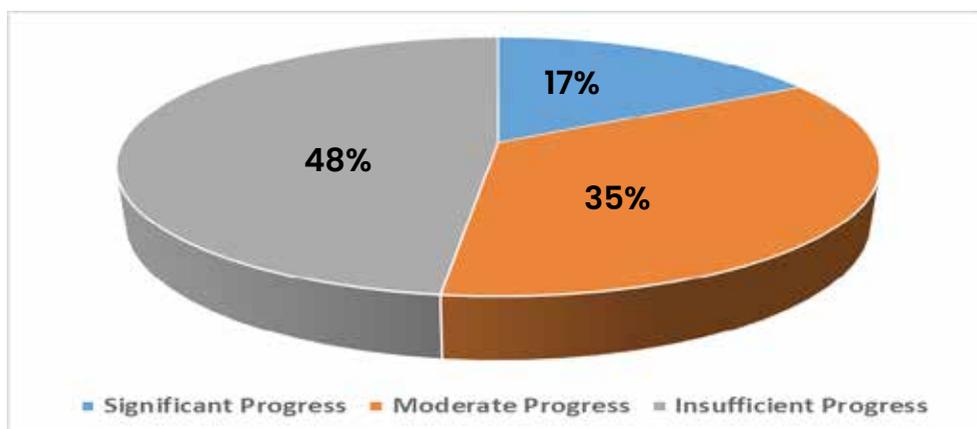
There are so many things Malawi has to do differently to turn around the situation. It is high time the developing country started implementing its development policies and frameworks. Evidence abound that Malawi has sound policies and frameworks which are frustrated by lack of willingness by duty bearers to implement. Local mobilization of resources is weak. With SDGs emphasizing on local resource mobilization, Malawi is disadvantaged to perform SDG miracles. Empowerment of citizens is critical to ensure accountability is demanded at various levels of the development cycle. As it stands, most citizens are not empowered to take action against duty bearers who demonstrate incapability to bring about befitting public services. Good governance is imperative for effective realization of SDGs. Malawi has been rocked by several instances of public pulse abuse. Failure to address corruption is a recipe for SDG implementation disaster. With a new Government in place, there is renewed hope that corruption might be dealt with.

Malawi being one of the 50 countries that are presenting Voluntary National Reports on SDGs to the United Nations in 2020; the report offers concrete opinions to the Government of Malawi, civil society, development partners, citizen groups and private sector on how Malawi can take a positive trajectory towards achieving SDGs. The report will be used for engaging various policy makers to sustain the momentum for achieving SDGs.

Significant progress has been made on SDGs 2: “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture” and SDG 4: “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” SDG 2 has benefitted from targeted Farm Input Subsidy Programme (FISP) while SDG 4 from free primary education policy that has increased enrolment in schools.⁴

However, many targets, indicators or goals are off track, seriously deficient with little or no progress towards the target (less than 50% progress from baseline). Insufficient progress has been made on SDG 1: Ending poverty in all its forms; SDG 6: Gender equality; SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production; SDG 14: Life under water; and SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions.⁵ Malawi’s SDGs progress has been depicted in below:

Malawi’s SDGs Progress (Source: Annual Progress Report, December 2018)



III. Way Forward

Audit established significant financing gaps, suggesting that substantial increases in domestic resource mobilization will be required to ensure adequate resources for attaining the SDGs. In addition, the audit established that official direct assistance (ODA) is critical if the SDGs are to be achieved. While adequate budget allocations are a necessary condition for achieving the SDGs, the quality of budget content and execution as measured by the Government’s ability to effectively meet revenue and expenditure targets remains crucial.⁶

In the same vein, there is need to create a platform for involving all the stakeholders in planning, designing and implementing interventions for attaining the SDGs. Currently, Malawi does not have a multi-stakeholder group to oversee the process of implementing the SDGs. During the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Malawi had a National Steering Committee that comprised stakeholders from various sectors including civil society. Such a committee is not yet constituted. The National Planning Commission (NPC), which is a Government entity tasked to oversee the attainment of the SDGs, has the liberty to choose who to invite as partner in the implementation of the SDGs.

4 Government of Malawi SDGs Annual Progress Report, December 2018

5 Ibid

6 UNDP, Sustainable Development Goals Audit on the National Budget Alignment in Malawi, October 2018



2. OVERVIEW OF CLIMATE CHANGE

I. Effects of Climate in Malawi

Malawi experiences extreme impacts of climate change including heavy flooding, flash floods in urban areas, drought and frequent dry spells. In 2015, Malawi experienced worst flood crisis in over 3 decades. The crisis affected 1, 101, 364 people, with 2 deaths and 3 missing. Consequently, in 2016/17 growing season, close to 730, 000 households required food assistance. The total loss was estimated at MK365 billion (US 494 million).⁷

According to the World Bank, floods and droughts are the leading cause of chronic food insecurity which is common in many parts of the country. The World Bank estimates that droughts, on average, causes GDP losses of almost 1% every year with much greater losses for extreme droughts.⁸

II. Factors that contribute to climate change

Climate change challenges are worsened by environmental degradation. The impact of human activity and consumption on the environment is high, and if not controlled will lead to intergenerational poverty and deprivation that will result in a vicious cycle of poor living

7 Government of Malawi SDGs Annual Progress Report, December 2018

8 Irish Aid. Malawi Climate Action Report for 2016

standards. Land degradation and deforestation are huge challenges facing the environment and contributing to climate change. High levels of deforestation and land degradation are caused by, among other things, charcoal burning and unsustainable farming practices that include poor soil fertility and land management practices.⁹

III. Malawi's adherence to the Paris agreement

In recognition of the increasing climate-related challenges, the Government and the development partners initiated activities to determine vulnerability and adaptation priorities, and to integrate this knowledge into development and sectoral planning.¹⁰ In line with the Paris Agreement, the activities focus on reducing carbon emissions and decelerating global warming.

To domesticate the Paris Agreement, Malawi enacted several laws and policies including the Environmental Management Act (2017); National Climate Change Management Policy (2016); and National Environmental Policy (2004). In addition, Malawi has many plans and strategies for attaining SDG 13 including the Nationally Determined Contributions (2018); National Environment and Climate Change Communication Strategy (2012); Malawi's Climate Change Learning Strategy (2012); National Climate Change Investment Plan (2014); National Adaptation Programmes of Action (2015); Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (2015); and National Adaptation Plans (being developed).

Malawi has a National Resilience Strategy (NRS) in order to reduce exposure and build resilience of people vulnerable to impacts of climate change, shocks (economic, social and environment) and natural disasters. Furthermore, Malawi has a functional National and Local Disaster Risk Reduction Management Strategy, developed in 2015.¹¹

IV. Way Forward

Availability of laws, policies and strategies notwithstanding, a number of challenges remain. There is a gap regarding mainstreaming climate change adaptation concerns into ministerial level planning and activities, increasing data collection and monitoring of climate-related changes, and addressing capacity and financial constraints to carry out climate change adaptation at the local level.¹² Moreover, charcoal burning and unsustainable agriculture methods remain major hazard to the environment and contribute significantly to climate challenges. Accordingly, there is need to develop and implement sustainable energy policies notably the use of solar and wind electricity, and the strengthening of already available hydroelectric power.

9 Government of Malawi SDGs Annual Progress Report, December 2018

10 USAID (NA) Climate Change Adaptation in Malawi

11 Malawi SDGs Baseline Report 2017

12 USAID (NA) Climate Change Adaptation in Malawi



Targeted interventions for vulnerable groups are required to achieve SDGs

3. KEY CONSTITUENTS THAT ARE MOST MARGINALISED

The key principle for the SDGs is reaching the furthest and leaving no one behind. Thus the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development endeavours to reach first those who are furthest behind. In Malawi, the elderly, girls and women, ultra-poor families in rural and urban settings, and prisoners are the most vulnerable.

I. Elderly Persons

Due to their physical conditions, the elderly cannot do tough physical work and fend for themselves. They lack capital for business as they are discriminated against by micro finance organisations. They also fear failure to repay the loans and having their property grabbed as collateral. They rarely access Government social cash transfers, as the programme is marred with vested interests of the Government administrators and local leaders. The elderly who live alone are straddled with domestic chores and sometimes have to dig the soil to survive. In extreme cases, the elderly are accused of witchcraft and chased from their communities and end up destitute.¹³ .

II. Vulnerable children, girls and women

Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world with 50.7% of the population living below

13 Research on Women's Access to Economic Rights in Older Age commissioned by HelpAge International

the poverty line and 25% living in extreme poverty.¹⁴ The poverty situation is worsened by the HIV scourge that has left many children orphaned and destitute. Many child-headed, or single parent families are ultra-poor and live in dire situations. Girls and women are the most affected as they are culturally looked down and discriminated against. Girls are particularly at high risk of dropping out of school because of hunger, crowded classrooms, and child marriages.¹⁵

Malawi has the 11th highest rate of child marriage in the world, with 47% of women marrying before the age of 18.¹⁶ Malawi is eighth amongst the top 20 countries with the highest child marriage rates in the world. There is a dramatically high proportion of girls who are already in marriage by the age of 18. Currently, 50 per cent of adolescent girls get married by the age of 18, compared to only 9 per cent of boys. Girls get married as young as 12 years. Malawi registers about 106, 600 teenage pregnancies annually (29%). Roughly, 30% of girls give birth before age 19. On the other hand, one in five females are sexually abused before age 18.¹⁷

III. Prisoners

The living conditions in the Malawi prisons are appalling. Malawi prisons are estimated to exceed their capacity by 200%. Consequently, there are extremely unsanitary conditions. Prisoners use foul stinking toilets and intermittent shower rooms. The combination of unsanitary conditions, poor nutrition and unsafe water is a cause for high death rates among the inmates.

Prisoners are denied their human rights. An estimated 1400 murder suspects have been awaiting trial since 2006, but are still languishing in overcrowded cells with poor ventilation i.e. Mvula has 3900 inmates in cells meant for 600 persons. According to a report published by the Prisons Directorate (2016), being in Malawi prison causes mental disorders.¹⁸

IV. Human Rights Defenders

A typical human rights defender in Malawi cannot be classified as a poor person. However, human rights defenders are vulnerable. Civil society organisations working in the governance arena are viewed as advancing the agenda of opposition parties or simply aiming at toppling Government, hence discriminated against by incumbent Governments. For example, the Human Rights Defenders Coalition has been in bad books with the former Government of Professor Peter Mutharika for organising demonstrations against the May 2019 tripartite elections, which the Malawi courts eventually annulled. Individual human rights defenders were either arrested, received threats of physical harm, or had their properties destroyed.

14 International Monetary Fund, May 2017

15 A second chance for girls in Malawi, UNCT Malawi, November 2019

16 African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP 2017) Ending Child Marriage in Malawi: What the evidence tells us, Issue Brief

17 Malawi Demographic Health Survey (2015-2016)

18 Raphael Mweninguwe (2016) Facing hell in prison. raphael.mweninguwe@hotmail.com



Safe and potable water should be prioritized for rural communities

4. CIVIL SOCIETY PRIORITIES

The Malawi civil society has crucial demands to the Government and other stakeholders to ensure effective attainment of the SDGs. The demands embody what should be done to enable the civil society and other stakeholders to effectively contribute to the attainment of sustainable development. The demands include, but not limited to the following:

I. Prudence in the utilisation of public resources

Civil society demands good governance, transparency and accountability in the collection and utilization of public resources. The public procurement processes must also be transparent and done in the spirit of promoting the public good. The Government and stakeholders must prevent the diversion of public resources through fraud, corruption and embezzlement.

The Malawi public service is notorious for looting public resources. In September 2013, a Government accounts clerk whose monthly emoluments were less than \$100 was found with huge sums of cash estimated at over \$300,000.00 in his car. A week later, there was an assassination attempt on Malawi's budget director. The scandal, dubbed Cashgate by the local media, involved the misappropriation of Government funds through the transfers from the Government bank accounts to private companies in disguise for payment of goods and services. The scandal was dubbed cash gate because low level public officers who were

arrested for committing the offenses under this scheme were found with stockpiles of cash in their homes and vehicles.¹⁹ Civil society demands that such looting of public resources must be stopped.

II. Financing of development plans from the communities

Annually, citizens generate development plans through Local Government structures-Village Action Plans (VAPs), Area Development Plans (ADPs) and District Development Plans (DDPs). The locally generated plans represent the desires of people. However, the national budget rarely reflect these plans and funds are barely available for their implementation.²⁰ Worse still, the Constituency Development Fund (CDF), the Local Development Fund (LDF) and the District Development Fund (DDP) are affected by rampant corruption, such that their impact on development is dismally meaningful. Accordingly, civil society demands that central Government must consider effectively funding the local plans, and fight against corruption in the administrations of the local funds, if Malawi has to attain the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

III. National budget should be formulated based on MGDS III

Development planning in Malawi has been a challenge. Once new regimes are ushered into office there is no transitioning of the national development agenda. In addition, political party manifestos which political administrations prioritise are not properly aligned to the national and global development goals.²¹ Consequently, long and medium term government strategies are not always compatible with SDGs and the MGDS III as a key domestication tool for the SDGs. Accordingly, civil society demands that the national budget be informed by the MGDS III, and that the ruling political parties should have their manifestos aligned to the MGDS III or subsequent medium term strategies. Beyond informing implementation of the SDGs, Government should allocate adequate resources for implementation of MGDS III.

IV. Expand the shrinking civic space

Malawi's current political and legal dynamics are threatening the existence of NGOs in the governance arena. The Government drafted an NGO (Amendment) Bill in 2018 that, if passed in its entirety, will further shrink the civic space i.e. exorbitant fees paid by board members, surrendering of assets to Government, making NGO Board an Authority with both regulation and coordination functions, a Minister appointing NGO Board members, and removal of CONGOMA from the NGO Law. The bill is a review of the NGO Act (2000). As mentioned earlier, the NGOs which work in the governance and human rights field are put in the same category as opposition political parties, whose aim is to 'thwart' all Government efforts. Governments are usually comfortable with service NGOs in fields like health, agriculture and education. Civil society therefore demands the expansion of the shrinking civic space, to allow NGOs to demand accountability from the duty bearers on the utilizations of public resources and attainment of development outcomes.

19 Cash Gate Scandal in Malawi. A Presentation Made At The Global Expert Group Meeting On Corruption Involving Vast Quantities Of Assets Held In Lima, Peru, December, 2018

20 Government of Malawi SDGs Annual Progress Report, December 2018

21 Ibid



Multi-stakeholder policy dialogue is key to achieving SDGs

5. CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT

I. Policy Dialogue

Malawi is one of the 50 countries which were asked to inform the development of the SDGs. Hence Malawi contributed to the priority areas of the SDGs. In all the processes civil society was involved, though not regularly. Civil society organisations contributed to the preparations of the SDGs through Government Technical Working Groups (TWGs), Sector Working Groups (SWGs), and Sector Wide Approaches (SWAPs). However, as mentioned earlier, Malawi had a multi-stakeholder national steering committee on MDGs, but none for the SDGs. The National Planning Commission - NPC, which is under the Ministry Economic Planning and Development, is not a stakeholder sensitivity entity, but rather a Government agency that decides who to invite.

Nevertheless, during implementation of the SDGs, the engagement is improving. Civil society organisations under the umbrella of the Council for Non-governmental Organisations in Malawi (CONGOMA) have regular contacts and are working together with the NPC. CONGOMA is co-chairing the national envisioning process with NPC and is also co-hosting the inaugural National Development Conference scheduled for August 2020.

The challenge is that implementation is weak. Local planning processes have to be improved to ensure that the SDGs are translated into actions that all stakeholders can focus on.

With the current reforms being championed by the Government, it would be instrumental to convene multi-stakeholder annual reviews to assess progress and establish the extent to which public institutions can effectively embrace SDGs.

Currently, many local NGOs are left behind, because they are not able to raise resources for demanding accountability from duty bearers. Development partners provide resources to international NGOs which sub grant to local NGOs. As a result, the money that actually reaches the local NGOs is small, as much is lost through administrative costs. Due to poor implementation of the NGO policy to guide their operations, a trend has emerged where International NGOs are going straight into communities to implement programmes without even local NGO partnerships. This has resulted in dissolution of some local NGOs. To reverse this trend, it would be critical for international NGOs to focus on building capacity of local NGOs and mobilise resources for NGO accountability to enable the local NGOs contribute towards achievement of SDGs.

II. Review of Evidence and Data

Data quality and unavailability made it impossible to analyse all targets and indicators for the SDGs. In 2018, data was available for a total of 168 global indicators out of 232, representing 72% availability.²² Data is captured by the National Statistical Office (NSO). However, the glaring gap is that not all data is captured. The challenge is that Government considers data from civil society and other stakeholders as ‘unofficial’ and such data is not used in the monitoring and reporting of SDGs. In the same vein, civil society considers data from Government as unreliable, as there is mismatch between data collected by NSO and data collected by civil society organisations. Thus to improve data quality and availability, there is need to develop a clear road map and a national data operational plan for monitoring and evaluation. This can be achieved through increased investments in improving national statistical system.²³ Additionally, the State should be encouraged to interlink all data using the National Registration Bureau system which is meant to keep data for all registered Malawians. A National Consolidated System should address these challenges.

As a remedy to fill the data gaps, civil society recommends that Government should consider ‘unofficial data’ from other stakeholders in the monitoring and reporting of SDGs. To facilitate easy accessibility of the data, a depository of research finding from all stakeholders including the academia, NGOs is recommended. Thus a Generic standardised training could be undertaken to certify all data collection officers for their data to be considered as credible in line with the training offered. There is need to develop guidelines for the Access to Information Law, to enable easy access to Government data by the civil society and citizens. Currently, civil society finds it very difficult to access data on SDGs from the Government agencies. Consequently, civil society mostly use uncharted and unofficial channels to access the information. Additionally, the National Commission for Science and Technology should be vigilant in coordination research activities in Malawi.

22 Government of Malawi SDGs Annual Progress Report, December 2018

23 Ibid



Raising awareness on SDGs should be prioritized to enhance accountability

6. PUBLIC AWARENESS

I. Translation of the SDGs and Engagement of Local Governments

The SDGs and the indicators have been translated into local languages (Chichewa, Tumbuka, Yao and Sena) by UNDP in collaboration with the Government. The translated versions are used for sensitizing masses at grassroots. Local Governments are engaged in the implementation of the MGDS III which is aligned with the SDGs. Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MoLGRD) and the Malawi Local Government Association (MALGA) had a project on sensitization of SDGs at local level, but in selected districts. However, the challenge is that most of the local development plans are not deliberately aligned to SDGs. Local politics takes centre stage when it comes to the development of Village Action Plans, Area Development Plans and District Development Plans. The plans are created to serve interests of political party members and to facilitate distribution of economic benefits. On the other hand, conflicting political interests and transferring of staff from the local councils affects implementation.

II. Education Bodies and Researchers

Universities in Malawi have research departments that can contribute to monitoring of the implementation of activities for attaining the SDGs. For example, the University of Malawi, Chancellor College, has a vibrant Centre for Social Research that has capabilities of

conducting robust research to inform the implementation of the SDGs. There are also many private think tanks and researchers that can contribute effectively to the attainment of the Agenda 2030. However, the educational bodies and researchers are poorly funded and side-lined, implying they are not actively seeking to analyse and share the SDGs. In earnest, the education bodies and researchers can only conduct the research or share information on the SDGs, only when they have sourced external funding, which is not easy to come by. However, there is need for National Commission for Science and Technology and National Planning Commission to coordinate research dissemination at sector (e.g. Sector Working Groups, multi-stakeholder groups) and national levels. Furthermore, efforts should be made by all researchers (Government, think tanks, civil society, Development Partners, private sector) to make findings user friendly i.e. easy to understand summaries, translations and actionable recommendations / models.

III. Civil Society Work Aligned to SDGs

CONGOMA, as an umbrella body for NGOs in Malawi, shared the SDGs with all its members and requested the members to align their programmes accordingly. Most donors funding is also aligned to the SDGs. The challenge avails when donor funding is not aligned to local priorities, as most donors focus on international instruments without regard to local pressing needs. Nonetheless, the SDGs cover all aspects of life, such that NGOs implement activities to attain them, even when the NGOs are not aware that what they are implementing is aligned with the SDGs.

SECTION 2: GOAL PROGRESS

A. Summary of people’s perspectives

Description of the scores:

	Strong progress (4-5 score)
	Moderate progress (3 score)
	Insufficient or No progress (1-2 score)

GOALS	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS	Policy & Legal framework	Plans and Strategies	Government Agencies	Implementation	Capacity Building	Monitoring Evaluation & Reporting	Transparency & Accountability	Overall Progress
1	No Poverty	5	3	2	2	4	4	2	3
2	Zero Hunger	4	4	5	2	3	3	2	3
3	Good Health & Wellbeing	4	4	3	2	3	3	3	3
4	Quality Education	5	4	4	3	3	3	3	3
5	Gender Equality	4	3	2	2	3	2	1	3
6	Clean Water & Sanitation	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	2
7	Affordable & Clean Energy	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3
8	Decent Work & Economic Growth	3	3	3	1	3	1	3	3
9	Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	3
10	Reduced Inequalities	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	2
11	Sustainable Cities & Communities	3	2	3	2	2	2	1	2
12	Responsible Consumption & Production	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
13	Climate Action	4	4	3	3	3	2	2	3
14	Life Below Water	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
15	Life on Land	4	4	3	2	2	1	2	2
16	Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	3	3	2	4	4	5	5	3
17	GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3

Detailed information on the scores

1. END EXTREME POVERTY IN ALL FORMS BY 2030

Aspect	Ratings					Reasons
	1	2	3	4	5	
Policy or legal framework available					X	Malawi has developed a number of policy documents to align herself to achieving the SDGs i.e. Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS III); Malawi National Social Support Programme (March 2018); National Agriculture Policy (2017).
Plans and strategies			X			Malawi established the National Planning Commission (NPC) to formulate and review policies and strategic plans; Malawi National Resilience Programme (2018-2030) which is aimed to break the cycle of food insecurity; Social Cash Transfer Programme which is unconditional programme targeting the ultra-poor and the labour constrained; Public Sector Reforms Programme which was formulated to addressing bottlenecks in service delivery. Likewise, Malawi has the National Agriculture investment plan; National Strategy for financial inclusion; and develop annual development plans through local structures to respond to the needy of the poor e.g. District Development Plan, Area Development Plan and Village Development plan. However, most of these plans have insufficient or no budget allocation to finance implementation.
Government agencies	X					Despite having the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, and the National Planning Commission, there is poor coordination and exchange of information among Government Agencies responsible for sectoral implementation of the SDGs.
Implementation		X				There is inadequate resource allocation, weak capacity and coordination among stakeholders implementing the SDGs in Malawi. Implementation lacks inclusive, cross-cutting and multi-stakeholder approach which result into poor coordination and systems.
Capacity building				X		Despite capacity to develop plans, strategies and policies, Malawi lacks implementation capacity to guarantee a labour force that is well educated, skilled and economically engaged.

Aspect	Ratings					Reasons
Monitoring, evaluation and reporting					X	To ensure effective monitoring, evaluation and reporting of SDGs in Malawi, Government has developed a National Statistical System Strategic Plan (2020-2023) to enable evidence-based planning and timely available of official statistics for monitoring and evaluation of MGDS III and SDGs. However, there is no effective implementation and monitoring systems in place of all global, regional, national obligations and commitments to empower citizens.
Transparency and accountability		X				The implementation lacks transparency and accountability as there is inadequate systems and strategies to strengthen the capacity of Government and implementing stakeholders to access and track progress in the implementation of SDGs in Malawi. Failure to implement the Access to Information Act has contributed to this lack of transparency and accountability.
Overall progress on this goal			X			Malawi lacks effective mechanism to ensure that policies, strategies and plans are well implemented, monitored and evaluated. Lack of proper budget allocation to the plans suffocates ambitions to achieve the global 2030 agenda for development.

2. END HUNGER, ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY AND IMPROVED NUTRITION AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Aspect	Ratings					Reasons
	1	2	3	4	5	
Policy or legal framework available				X		Availability of National Agriculture Policy, National Agriculture Extension Policy and Agriculture Sector Plans and others. However, rolling out these policies is on demand-driven basis, contrary to what used to happen in the past two decades where extension officers were the ones visiting farmers in communities.
Plans and strategies				X		Plans and strategies are available i.e. National Extension Plan, Agriculture Investment Plan. These plans are not well popularized to the general populace, and they do not solve the problem of scarcity of extension workers in rural communities.
Government agencies					X	Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Extension Services, Research Department, Livestock and Diseases Control Department and others.

Aspect	Ratings		Reasons
Implementation	X		Implementation of policies and strategies is a challenge, including the Farm Input Subsidy programme (FISP). In addition, there is poor extension services as smallholder farmers are not adequately assistance in the rural areas. Research findings are not well disseminated to various stakeholders and reports are not simplified for end users.
Capacity building		X	Most stakeholders including farmers, CSOs and policy makers (i.e. Members of Parliament) have less capacity to understand agriculture policies and strategies. This impacts negatively on implementation
Monitoring, evaluation and reporting		X	Agriculture programmes are not well monitored by stakeholders. So far monitoring reports have not been shared to stakeholders and to the general populace.
Transparency and accountability	X		There is a challenge regarding the implementation of FISP. Its investment is not commensurate with the number of the beneficiaries (MK45billion against 900,000 people 2019/2020 budget, while MK35billion against 1,100 million beneficiaries 2020/2021 budget). Stakeholders and Community members are not provided with information regarding the agriculture programmes. Research findings are properly shared with stakeholders. Operations of Agriculture Agencies such as ADMARC (Agricultural Development and Marketing Cooperation) are questionable as fewer stakeholders understand their operations.
Overall progress on this goal		X	To a certain extent the goal is being achieved though the mode of implementation is very weak.

3. ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES

Aspect	Ratings					Reasons
	1	2	3	4	5	
Policy or legal framework available				X		Availability of Public health Act, COVID-19 framework / guidelines, Community Health Policy, Maternal Health Policy, Reproductive Health Policy, HIV/AIDS (Prevention and Management) Act, SRHR policy, and TB policy. However, effectiveness of these policies has been questioned in some public health instances i.e. early pregnancies, limited human resource etc
Plans and strategies				X		Availability of the National Community Health Strategy, National Strategy for Adolescent Girls and Young Women, HIV Policy and Strategy, Cancer Strategy, condom strategy, TB strategy, and Maternal health Strategy.
Government agencies			X			Ministry of Health, Medical Council of Malawi, TB Control Program, District Health Offices and many other agencies coordinate the SDGs implementation.
Implementation		X				Implementation is going on well especially on HIV, vaccines, malaria and Tuberculosis and some cancers. Slow progress is on sexual and reproductive health of adolescents and young people. Most interventions lack better monitoring and evaluation systems as well as community support and engagements in order to instil responsibility in the people since SRHR is more of personal responsibilities and choices. The major challenge is corruption and pilferage of medical equipment and drugs. The absence of medical insurance for many and use fees makes attainment of universal health coverage a tall order.
Capacity building			X			The health sector has medical personnel with necessary capacities, but is hit by a huge vacancy rate to the extent that the ratios of personnel to citizens are appalling. Other stakeholders have less knowledge of universal health coverage. There is need for capacity building in the communities.
Monitoring, evaluation and reporting			X			Stakeholders' involvement in monitoring the government programs is a challenge, i.e. TB and maternal health programme. There is need to strengthen coordination with stakeholders to ensure effective monitoring and reporting on the SDG.

Aspect	Ratings					Reasons
Transparency and accountability			X			Theft of and inadequate resources in the health sector and corruption in accessing of public health services especially treatment is also the challenge.
Overall progress on this goal			X			Ministry of health is performing well despite the issues of corruption.

4. ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

Aspect	Ratings					Reasons
Policy or legal framework available	1	2	3	4	5	X Malawi has a supportive domestic policy framework to drive SDG 4. Firstly, SDGs are aligned to the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) ²⁴ III. This development blue print places education as one of the priority sectors. Secondly, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) ²⁵ developed the National Education Policy (2016), National Strategy on Inclusive Education (2017), as well as the National Education Standards (2016) which seek to provide equitable, inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all. Thirdly, Malawi has the National Girls Education Strategy (2018) which aims at ensuring that girls have equal access to equality education in Malawi.
Plans and strategies				X		Malawi has a National Education Sector Plan (NESP) and the revised Education Sector Implementation Plan (ESIP), including Girls Education strategies, and the Child Friendly Schooling Strategy.
Government agencies				X		By developing different policy frameworks and plans and strategies, Malawi has shown that it is committed to achieving the SDG 4. In addition, in 2018, Malawi pledged the highest resource allocation to the education sector in Africa during the GPE Pledging Conference held in Senegal.

²⁴ SDGs are domesticated in the MGDS III

²⁵ MoEST takes lead in the attainment of SDG 4

Aspect	Ratings		Reasons
Implementation	X		Most of the policies, good as they are on paper, are not fully implemented due to limited financing as well as weak institutions. This has made implementation slow and follow up difficult.
Capacity building	X		The capacity built is limited to government agencies. It does not embrace that of non-state actors and decentralized structures such as School Management Committees (SMCs), Plan Teacher Associations (PTAs), Mother Groups (MGs), Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Area Development Committees (ADCs). Inadequate capacity is also an outcome of the weak coordination with government agencies. Consequently, non-state actors are not fully integrated in government's capacity building. Donors too are doing very little to enhance the capacity of non-state actors.
Monitoring, evaluation and reporting	X		<p>Although government uses the Education Standards (2016) to monitor progress, the process is tailor made to paint a good picture. The joint sector reviews (JSR) that government undertakes each year are not consultative enough; there is no involvement of civil society.</p> <p>Government also maintains the EMIS which provides data in different areas of education (enrolment, dropout, retention, completion etc.). However, in most instances such information does not reflect the reality on the ground. In addition, the information is collected by the central government with less involvement of the local councils. The local councils' roles are limited to the validation of the data that is captured.</p>
Transparency and accountability	X		Transparency and accountability is moderate. There is little to no involvement of civil society in the JSR and EMIS processes. MoEST rarely consult other stakeholders especially Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in budget formulation. Disclosure of finance or budget information does not usually happen. Most information is deemed classified and not privy to the general public. Most of recommendations by the Parliament Committee on Education are either not taken on board or are deemed irrelevant. This challenge undermines the oversight function of the Committee.

Aspect	Ratings	Reasons
Overall progress on this goal	X	<p>Overall progress is moderate. Equity and inclusiveness still remains a challenge. The marginalized groups such as children with disability are consistently left behind, though components of the quota system were supposed to address such.</p> <p>On the other hand, financing to the education sector still remains inadequate. The education budget provides very little for development as over 80% represents statutory payments.</p> <p>Declining efforts by NGOs due to lack of funding from donors further exacerbates the situation as government lacks capacity to fully guarantee inclusiveness and equitable quality education.</p>

5. ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

Aspect	Ratings					Reasons
	1	2	3	4	5	
Policy or legal framework available				X		Malawi has Gender Equality Act, Gender Policy (need to be reviewed), Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act, Deceased Estates Act (wills, Inheritance and Protection) among many acts and policies that government developed. The Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare (MoGCDSW) created a good platform to respond to the global agenda.
Plans and strategies			X			Some plans are available for example the Economic Empowerment Plan for Women and Girls, which is linked to SADC gender protocols
Government agencies		X				The availability of the MoGCDSW shows commitment of the government to achieve SDG 5. However, there is little resource allocation into the MoGCDSW and government departments that has a stake on the implementation of policies and programmes on gender equality.
Implementation		X				There are serious challenges related to implementation of the programmes on gender, because the government depends on resources from donors. Likewise, most grassroots CSOs fail to effectively support the government due to resources constraints.

Aspect	Ratings	Reasons
Capacity building	X	There is low capacity to implement policies and programmes related to gender. The available skills are not used optimally. The MoGCDSW failed to implement 50/50 campaign. The 50/50 campaign seeks to promote women empowerment through thriving to increase the number of women in influential positions.
Monitoring, evaluation and reporting	X	There is need for Government to promote monitoring and evaluation and reporting of programmes. The challenge is that when most policies and strategies expire government does not evaluate their implementation. This challenge is worse in local councils amongst district departments.
Transparency and accountability	X	There is inadequate transparency and accountability on programmes that have an aspect of promoting gender equality and equity like the Social Cash Transfers; Safety Net Fund on COVID for women business (mounting to 2billion Malawi Kwacha); Economic empowerment fund for women and girls; and other social protection programmes that the government is implementing. Up to date there is no disability fund although the government has been mentioning it in its plans and statements.
Overall progress on this goal	X	The MoGCDSW and its departments did not effectively promote transparency and accountability of the management and allocation of funds to departments at district level. Huge sums of funds on social cash transfers have not been explained to stakeholders. Thus the ministry has not performed well in achieving SDG 5.

6. ENSURE AVAILABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL

Aspect	Ratings	Reasons
	1 2 3 4 5	
Policy or legal framework available	X	Malawi has outdated policies (Sanitation Policy (2008) & Water Policy (2005)); sanitation legislation not available (only a draft bill). Regulation for national water resources is operationalized but there is no regulation for water supply & sanitation. While some instruments exist to regulate the management of water resources & infrastructure these are deliberately flouted or hardly adhered to by various stakeholders.

Aspect	Ratings		Reasons
Plans and strategies	X		SDG responsive plans such as National Sanitation & Hygiene Strategy (2018-2024) exist. These draw from MGDS III (which prioritizes water & sanitation) and National Health Sector Strategic Plan (2017-2022) among others. However, these are not adequately implemented and financial plans are inadequately resourced.
Government agencies	X		Leadership for sanitation & hygiene is loosely provided for across two ministries & there has been a stand-off between the two Ministries for several years now which has affected sector progress. While the National Sanitation Policy clearly states who the policy holder is Ministry of Agriculture, leadership for sanitation has been a bone of contention between the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Agriculture. There is need to empower District Water Officers to effectively play their gatekeeper / coordination role in the districts
Implementation	X		While plans exist, they are not adequately implemented & are hardly / always inadequately resourced.
Capacity building	X		There has been no commitment / meaningful action to capacitate the Directorate of Water Supply & Sanitation in the (then) Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation & Water Development. A window which central Government opened for capacitating district water offices by employing water monitoring assistants (WMAs) was not fully utilized, ending in a blame-game as to who is responsible / mandated to recruit the WMAs.
Monitoring, evaluation and reporting	X		Some positive changes were registered as follows: Review of Joint Sector Review process & development of process improvement plan; review of sector headline indicators to ensure alignment with SDGs; and national mapping of water points. However, commitment by the line ministry to ensure that these inputs and processes yield full results seems to be lacking. There is no urgency to implement recommendations from such process to ensure sector development.
Transparency and accountability	X		While sector coordination and accountability frameworks and structures exist, accountability processes, especially for sector performance is weak. There is limited functionality of a national, coordination, monitoring & accountability system, which every stakeholder should use. There is no meaningful implementation of sanctions or rewards to ensure satisfactory performance of public officers responsible for ensuring functionality of coordination, monitoring & accountability structures. Moreover, there is political interference in the management of utility companies, which compromises functionality & makes the utilities not accountable to the citizenry.

Aspect	Ratings	Reasons
Overall progress on this goal	X	Per the Joint Monitoring Program reports released in 2019 based on 2017 data, Malawi achieved 69% and 26% for “basic” water and sanitation respectively at a time when Malawi is aiming to achieve at least 95% basic water supply services and 100% basic sanitation services by 2030. One of the reasons for the slow progress towards attaining the SDG targets is low political prioritization of WASH, evidenced in inadequate and declining public funding to the sector. Public funding to the sector has been inadequate to meet sector investment targets and has decreased over the last five years (7.82% of the total national budget in 2011/2012 fiscal year to just over 1% in 2018/2019 fiscal year).

7. ENSURE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, RELIABLE, SUSTAINABLE AND MODERN ENERGY FOR ALL

Aspect	Ratings					Reasons
	1	2	3	4	5	
Policy or legal framework available				X		Malawi has a National Energy Policy (2003) and Energy Regulation Act (2004). Thus is a conducive legal and policy framework that should guide investment and services in the energy sector. However, although many Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) have been signed, there is no serious movement towards Independent Power Production (IPP). Unfortunately critical stakeholders in the sector are advancing challenging demands on Malawi Government towards increasing its electricity tariffs for any Independent power producer to make profits as at the current rate, they claim they will operate at a loss hence there are less interested producers to take up the opportunity.
Plans and strategies				X		Ambitious investment plans remain on paper and unfunded, for example the Malawi Renewable Energy Strategy. Malawi has high potential for solar and new hydro technologies that can enter into the power market. However, as a major donor recipient, the energy sector has major challenges including non cost-effective tariffs, access to finance, and the off-grid sector strategy which discourages new investors in the sector.
Government agencies				X		Although there is strong investor interest and political will for Independent Power Producers (IPPs) to enter the market, ESCOM and EGENCO remain highly controlled by government. These two entities require huge capital injections which government has not provided resulting in the firms engaging in huge borrowings. Hence, commitment to attain the SDG is low, as interference by the political elites hampers progress in the two entities.

Aspect	Ratings	Reasons
Implementation	X	<p>The incentives to woo investors and make them stay remains weak. Most Investors have stiff conditions not favourable to the people of Malawi i.e. the desire for the electricity tariffs to be increased to above MK250 per kilowatt as opposed to the current MK58 charge.</p> <p>Power Africa is actively engaged in the development of the Malawi's power sector and has signed an MOU with government and other players to increase the generation and supply of electricity. On the other hand, the Malawi Energy Regulatory Authority (MERA) evaluated ESCOM's tariffs and revised them upwards September 2018. The revision to an extent puts the country in a better position for attracting investors in the sector.</p>
Capacity building	X	<p>Malawi's capacity to attain the desired goal remains farfetched. There is installed capacity of 439 Mega Watts (MW) (Hydroelectric: 384 MW and Solar: 55 MW) against a demand of over 720MW resulting in huge load shedding. Environmental degradation remains high thereby affecting investments and sustainable provision of energy resources to Malawians.</p> <p>There is though good will from USAID-funded activities that complemented the \$350 million Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Malawi Compact, as well as broader U.S. Government electrification efforts. ESCOM and EGENCO remains priority entities that needs to be freed from Government to promote independence and free programme implementation strategies to meet the gap.</p>
Monitoring, evaluation and reporting	X	<p>More work needs to be done to enhance monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in the energy sector. The public is not fully aware of the current plans and progress in the sector.</p>
Transparency and accountability	X	<p>The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) supported the development of the procurement framework that has increased the trust and confidence in firms working in the energy sector among the donors and other stakeholders. The involvement of Anti-Corruption Bureau in the procurement processes and other operations has increased transparency in the firms.</p>
Overall progress on this goal	X	<p>Potentially, IPPs are expected to add 185 MWs to the grid by end 2020, a 43 percent increase in Malawi's installed generation capacity. Public Private Partnerships (PPP) remains vital in the sector, as more targeted investments such as solar and wind propelled energy remains an option for Malawi. For example, the 300 MW <i>Mpatamanga</i> hydro project expected to be commissioned in 2025 will be a game changer for Malawi</p>

8. PROMOTE SUSTAINED, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH, FULL AND PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK FOR ALL

Aspect	Ratings					Reasons
	1	2	3	4	5	
Policy or legal framework available			X			Malawi has conducive labour laws, notably the National Employment and Labour Policy launched 2018 and the Progressive Employment Act amended 2010. However, implementation remains the challenge. Some jobs are yet to be decent, as rights at work are not fully recognized in some workplaces.
Plans and strategies			X			Malawi decent work country programme is in place. A Mandatory Pension Act exists and Decent Work Monitoring and Evaluation plans are available. However, implementation remains challenge.
Government agencies			X			The Ministry of Labour takes charge in providing policy direction for attaining SDG 8. Malawi also has Industrial Relations Court that handles many disputes related to employment and labour. However, both the Ministry and the Industrial Relations Court is not adequately funded, hence they are slow in addressing worker grievances.
Implementation	X					In Malawi labour inspections are not adequately carried out. There are numerous work place related injuries due to unsafe working environments. The afflicted workers do not get relief in time due to delays in accessing justice in the courts. Access to health remains a challenge as there is no universal health coverage. Poor coordination among agencies and departments result in increased lawsuits by workers against government entities. Moreover, there is inadequate support to promote employment creation, and to reduce dependence on donors for economic support.
Capacity building			X			The Ministry of Labour, employers and trade unions have not effectively built the capacity of stakeholders on SDG 8. Global economic trends coupled with COVID 19 pandemic have reduced the support from developed countries to build the capacity of institutions, workforce and stakeholders. Inadequate staffing at all levels slows the delivery of services for the promotion of decent work and full employment. Likewise, youth capacitation programmes are riddled with political interference. These programmes are either selective or restrictive such that not all youth can access the services let alone finances to enhance capacities.

Aspect	Ratings					Reasons
Monitoring, evaluation and reporting	X					Monitoring and evaluation of the policies and programmes related to SDG 8 is irregular. Implementation is ad hoc and the institutionalized structures set to monitor the attainment of the goal is weak. Due to inadequate capacity, the Ministry of labour does not regularly report on the goal. Consequently, the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development relies on projections in its development planning as no real data is available on exact jobs created or number and categories of the youths being empowered.
Transparency and accountability			X			The Ministry of Labour tries its best to share programmatic areas of the agenda, but is restrained by scarcity of resource. Social dialogue forums used to be intense because of donor support. However, since Lo-Norway withdrew its financial support, interactions between the social partners remain ad hoc. As a result, it takes the Unions or Employers to issue statements of condemnations on matters affecting labour for government to respond as opposed to round table, open and transparent sessions which used to take place.
Overall progress on this goal			X			While there is reasonable economic growth at 5.5% against the anticipated 5.7 for Africa and 7% targets for developing nations, Malawi remains behind in attaining the full and sustainable employment which is decent by 2030. The legal framework is conducive but enforcement and implementation remains a challenge. Thus policies speak to the attainment of this goal but there is need for more work and effort.

9. BUILD RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE, PROMOTE INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIALIZATION AND FOSTER INNOVATION

Aspect	Ratings					Reasons
	1	2	3	4	5	
Policy or legal framework available				X		Malawi Government aligned SDG in its National Development Planning Framework that is, the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy III. This shows commitment by the Government to achieve the 2030 Global agenda.

Aspect	Ratings			Reasons
Plans and strategies			X	The MGDS has provisions to transform the country in the long and medium terms. These include provisions on infrastructure development and industrialisation. However, the plans are yet to be realised.
Government agencies			X	The SDG is being spearheaded by the National Planning Commission (NPC) and the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development.
Implementation		X		The national budget include infrastructure development. However, incumbent governments have always paid lip service. Even where infrastructure has been constructed such as roads, the quality has been very poor.
Capacity building			X	The general public is not conversant with some technicalities taking place in the country as most documents are not simplified and popularized.
Monitoring, evaluation and reporting		X		Malawi has not done well on the monitoring and evaluation probably because of financial hiccups and information gap on developments taking place. Corruption is rampant in infrastructure projects.
Transparency and accountability		X		It is not easy to access information in the country especially from government departments.
Overall progress on this goal			X	Malawi is still behind, infrastructure in the country does not stand out compared to neighbouring African countries and quality of the constructions leaves a lot to be desired.

10. REDUCE INEQUALITY WITHIN AND AMONG COUNTRIES

Aspect	Ratings					Reasons
	1	2	3	4	5	
Policy or legal framework available			X			There are not adequate policies addressing inequality as a problem.
Plans and strategies			X			Limited policies on addressing inequality, most of the budgets we have seen being passed are not pro-poor.
Government agencies			X			The Government agencies to address inequality are available but they are not properly funded to address inequality.
Implementation		X				Implementation requires international efforts. Malawi on its own cannot address inequality among nations.
Capacity building		X				There is still a knowledge gap to understand inequality and to have strategies in place to address it.
Monitoring, evaluation and reporting		X				Monitoring of inequality should be done by international organisations like the UN. However, not much is currently done to address inequalities among nations, especially to uplift the living standards of people in developing countries.
Transparency and accountability			X			The government has done a number of efforts to promote transparency and accountability particularly by joining Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative - EITI, Open Government Partnership - OGP but there is need to advocate more on this pillar.
Overall progress on this goal		X				If Malawi is indeed to address inequality then there is need for updated laws, and strategize on implementation.

11. MAKE CITIES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS INCLUSIVE, SAFE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE

Aspect	Ratings					Reasons
	1	2	3	4	5	
Policy or legal framework available			X			Malawi has National Urban Policy (2019). The National Urban Policy (NUP) seeks to create an enabling environment for the attainment of sustainable urbanization.
Plans and strategies		X				The NUP puts forward strategies, which once implemented will address some of the major challenges associated with urban development and management in the country.
Government agencies			X			Malawi has Department of Urban Development within the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development to provide Policy guidance and institutional framework for urban development in the country.
Implementation		X				Operationalization of the policy has started. But impact is yet to be registered.
Capacity building		X				The city councils have inadequate capacity to control urban planning resulting in mushrooming of many unplanned settlements.
Monitoring, evaluation and reporting		X				Malawi regularly reports on the progress made on the SDG. The first report was made in 2018 through Monitoring and Evaluation Division in the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development (MoFEPD). In 2020, Malawi has also reported on the progress made on the SDG.
Transparency and accountability	X					Stakeholders are involved in the progress made in the SDGs. However, they is less transparency on land allocation in the cities.
Overall progress on this goal		X				The overall progress is still on its inception. Not much progress has been done in the implementation. All guiding strategies, including MGDSIII (2017), NUP (2019) are yet to be fully operationalized.

12. ENSURE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION PATTERNS

Aspect	Ratings					Reasons
	1	2	3	4	5	
Policy or legal framework available			X			Vision 2020 has performed badly to the extent that the country has failed to reach the status of a middle income country as envisioned. Hence the levels of development, Production and consumption are not in tandem with the real needs and capacities of the people on the ground. While consumer protection Act (Laws) exist Malawi remains a dumping state for western products or SADC products as they flood Malawian market thereby contributing to poor health i.e. Substandard Liquor- which despite being cheap, has serious side effects on the wellbeing. The National Strategy for Sustainable Development is an elaborate instrument which covers legal and policy framework on natural resources. Unfortunately it is yet to be reviewed.
Plans and strategies			X			The 2004 National strategy for sustainable development is outdated. There is no nationally agreed plan or strategy towards realizing this goal. CSO work is haphazard. Only few organisations are vibrant, Consumer Association of Malawi (CAMA), and Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy (CEPA) on environmental issues.
Government agencies			X			The Malawi Bureau of Standards is one of the state organs which controls standards, however its capacity is over stretched to the extent that it lacks collaboration with Malawi Revenue Authority or CFCTA to check all counterfeit goods entering Malawi without proper assessment. Political machination also play a role in the decisions made by MSB or CFCTA.
Implementation			X			Malawi will missed the target for 2020- environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes- as the country is highly infested with waste in streams, rivers and towns with no proper refuse collection management systems. There seems to be no leadership in this area; given its vastness national entities lack capacity to undertake initiatives in this area. Recycling of refuse is also very low.
Capacity building			X			Capacity building is inadequate and prioritization is a challenge. There no universal blueprint for joint coordination by ministries, departments and government agencies for coordinated strategies, including a national response from CSOs to guarantee success in this area.

Aspect	Ratings					Reasons
Monitoring, evaluation and reporting				X		There is no clear coordinated approach to monitoring, evaluation and reporting on developed strategies. Data remains low or unavailable making reporting for the SDG difficult.
Transparency and accountability				X		Accountability is a challenge as the reporting and control guidelines are sketchy. Most developments in this area are highly speculative as there is no proper transparency tools to guarantee peoples readily accessibility of the same in times of need.
Overall progress on this goal				X		The efforts remain low in guaranteeing success in for this SDG.

13. TAKE URGENT ACTION TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACT

Aspect	Ratings					Reasons
	1	2	3	4	5	
Policy or legal framework available				X		Malawi has Environmental Management Act (2017); National Climate Change Management Policy (2016); and National Environmental Policy – 2004.
Plans and strategies				X		Malawi has many plans and strategies for attaining SDG 13 including the Nationally Determined Contributions (2018); National Environment and Climate Change Communication Strategy (2012); Malawi’s Climate Change Learning Strategy (2012); National Climate Change Investment Plan (2014); National Adaptation Programmes of Action (2015); Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (2015); and National Adaptation Plans (being developed).
Government agencies				X		The agenda to achieve SDG 13 is led by Environmental Affairs Department. However, Malawi has several public agencies contributing to the implementation of various climate change interventions notably the Department of Disaster Management (DODMA), and the Ministry of Agriculture.
Implementation				X		Implementation of climate action face a lot of challenges including lack of adequate financial resources, and poor coordination among key stakeholders

Aspect	Ratings					Reasons
Capacity building			X			Little is being done to build capacity of stakeholders locally, but overall Malawians have the necessary capacity to implement climate actions.
Monitoring, evaluation and reporting		X				Monitoring, evaluation and reporting of climate actions face a huge challenge. There is lack of coordination and most of these activities are commissioned directly by the funding agencies.
Transparency and accountability		X				While as much as efforts are made to ensure transparency and accountability, reality on the ground is quite different. There is almost hide and seek game among key players and in the end, stakeholders engage in blame games.
Overall progress on this goal			X			Overall, Malawi has necessary frameworks and capacity to ably implement climate action. The key challenge is lack of coordination among key players (government, private sector, civil society, etc). Most of the activities implemented are mainly responding to needs of the donors at the expense of adhering to plans and strategies. And it is sad also to note that most of the financial resources in the field do not originate from within the concerned sectors.

14. CONSERVE AND SUSTAINABLY USE THE OCEANS, SEAS AND MARINE RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Aspect	Ratings					Reasons
	1	2	3	4	5	
Policy or legal framework available			X			Malawi has developed a number of policy documents to align herself to achieving the SDGs. The SGD is domesticated in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS III) and cascades into the Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy (2016).
Plans and strategies		X				Government launched National Fisheries and Aquaculture Research Agenda to guide local and international researchers and National Fisheries and Aquaculture Communications Strategy to help guide the spread of messages for fisheries, fish farmers, trader, processors and other players in the sector. The strategies are used to promote aquaculture practices, considering the depletion of fish stocks in the lakes of Malawi.

Aspect	Ratings	Reasons
Government agencies	X	The SDG is championed by the Department of Fisheries and the Department of Marine.
Implementation	X	There is high non-compliance of rules regulations by fishers. Insufficient budget allocation to the sector makes it difficult to implement programmes efficiently. There is inadequate and ineffective coordination among relevant players and departments in the sector- Department of Police service (Marine), Department of Forestry, Department of Fisheries and Beach village Committees.
Capacity building	X	There is inadequate capacity to promote and sustain aquaculture- unavailability of hatcheries or bleeding grounds for fish affect the availability of fingerlings which farmers can access to raise in their ponds. There also problems of capacity to monitor compliance among fishers in the lakes.
Monitoring, evaluation and reporting	X	Fisheries has a substandard fleet of vehicles and patrol speed boat in most field stations which makes it difficult to monitor and apprehend non-compliance fishers.
Transparency and accountability	X	The implementation lacks transparency and accountability as there is inadequate systems and strategies to strengthen the capacity of government and implementing stakeholders to access and track progress in the implementation of SDG14 in Malawi. The situation is worsened by corrupt practices by officials of Fisheries Department, who demand money from fishers and allow them to fish even during the off season.
Overall progress on this goal	X	Malawi has good policies, strategies and plans which, if properly put into action, the country can achieve the SDGs specifically Goal 14. However, the country lacks effective mechanism to ensure that policies, strategies and plans are well implemented, monitored and evaluated. Lack of, coordination among players, corruption, commitment and proper budget allocation to the plans suffocates ambitions to achieve the global 2030 agenda for development

15. PROTECT, RESTORE AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE USE OF TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS, SUSTAINABLY MANAGE FORESTS, COMBAT DESERTIFICATION, AND HALT AND REVERSE LAND DEGRADATION AND HALT BIODIVERSITY LOSS

Aspect	Ratings					Reasons
	1	2	3	4	5	
Policy or legal framework available				X		Laws and policies are available notably the Environmental Act, Climate Change Policy, Natural Resources Policy, Carbon Tax Policy, and Solid Waste Management Policy.
Plans and strategies				X		The MGDS III 2017-2022 has relevant provisions. Other strategies are also available like the Climate Change Strategy, Ecosystem and Biodiversity Plans, and Land and Lakes Strategy. However, these plans and strategies are not popularisation among stakeholders at grassroots.
Government agencies			X			Several Government departs take lead in attaining the SDG notably the Ministry of Energy, Climate Change Department, Fisheries Department, and Forest Department.
Implementation		X				Most interventions do not show impact, particularly on protection of environment and aquaculture production. There is poor management of wastes. Likewise, deforestation is still a major challenge. The dried up of Lake Chilungali in Nkhosakota District and reduction of water levels in Lake Chirwa attest to the dire situation. Moreover, research studies are not shared to stakeholders and not translated into actions.
Capacity building		X				The results of poor implementation of programmes is an indication of less capacity both from mainstream government, CSOs and the Private sector.
Monitoring, evaluation and reporting	X					Reports are not shared accordingly in government systems. Monitoring and Evaluation studies generate answers to critical problems.
Transparency and accountability		X				Accountability of funds in for the attainment of the SDG is questionable. There is less transparency on how huge sums of funds are utilized. Stakeholder involvement by the Ministry of Energy is very minimal.
Overall progress on this goal		X				Malawi progress on this SDG is very little because the Government does not provide solutions for most of the problem.

16. PROMOTE SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL AND BUILD EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE AND INCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONS AT ALL LEVELS PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE

Aspect	Ratings					Reasons
	1	2	3	4	5	
Policy or legal framework available			X			Policies are in place to ensure that the State can develop Legislation. For some time the efforts have had no backing of the Law. However, some of the Laws are outdated i.e. Criminal and Evidence Code is from the colonial period
Plans and strategies			X			The government is allowing the Donor Agencies such as the UNDP to dominate the advancement of the agenda. In short no substantial amount of public investment is being made in this area.
Government agencies		X				Non-state actors have intensified the implementation of the SDG. It is evident however that in the long -run, the State will take over the existing structures. The State should however push more resources towards this SDG.
Implementation				X		If Malawi had its own resources, the rate of implementation would have been greater that it is the case now.
Capacity building				X		All sectors of the country have embraced the SDG notwithstanding the source of funding. The gains made can be consolidated.
Monitoring, evaluation and reporting					X	The SDG has multiple National Plan of Action that require that the Country report to the Treaty Body for evaluation and monitoring. Further, the Country is supported to ensure that on Commemoration Days, the nation has activities for reflection to assess progress being made.
Transparency and accountability					X	As in Monitoring and Evaluation above.
Overall progress on this goal			X			There is need for a National Budget supporting the implementation to consolidate the achievements.

17. STRENGTHEN THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND REVITALIZE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Aspect	Ratings					Reasons
	1	2	3	4	5	
Policy or legal framework available			X			There are adequate tools at national level to boost plausible development planning in tandem with regional and global development strategies i.e. SADC RISDP, AU Agenda 2063 and UN's SDGs. The international tools are domesticated through the MGDS III, a medium term strategy that provides a roadmap for development. Malawi is a signatory to the UN and AU instruments for promoting partnerships.
Plans and strategies			X			<p>The MGDS III as a medium term strategy and systems of collecting data are available. However, the plans and strategies are scantily funded, with the budget not consistently aligned to MGDS III. Likewise, cyber security plans and strategies are available but their policing is weak and many citizens have been victimized.</p> <p>The Joint Cooperation Strategy provides hope for harnessing official development assistance (ODA). However, bad governance has eroded trust the donors have in giving Malawi direct budget support. Dormancy of the Common Approach to Budget Support (CABS) over the past 10 years has resulted in NGOs getting support to implement some projects, or the donors themselves involved in implementing projects, contrary to some tenets of financing mechanisms such as the Accra, Paris and Busan agreements.</p>
Government agencies			X			The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Reserve Bank of Malawi and National Planning Commission (NPC) show some commitment in achieving SDG 17. However, commitment is not commensurate with finances allocated to the SDG. Limited financing shows lack of seriousness on the part of the Government. On the other hand, there is weak synergy between government agencies and civil society organisations (CSOs), which compromises the effectiveness of the implementation of the MDGS III and other ancillary plans.
Implementation			X			There is limited implementation targeting SDG 17, with most of the targets relying on ODA. Technologically, Malawi lags behind as many people do not have access to the internet, though investments might reverse this trend in the near future.

Aspect	Ratings		Reasons
Capacity building	X		<p>Reports are rife that some resources are not spent as planned due to lack of capacity among public officers. This comprises the burning rate, which has a bearing on the flow of resources, particularly grants.</p> <p>In addition, capacity building support on the development agenda is limited to government agencies. Thus the involvement of CSO in fostering social accountability is weak less and has less impact.</p>
Monitoring, evaluation and reporting	X		<p>Data from National Statistical Office (NSO), Reserve Bank of Malawi, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance and Parliament reveals the extent to which Malawi is cooperating with other countries in terms of financial, material and technical support. Most of the cooperation are in form of loans and grants for specific projects.</p> <p>However, monitoring, evaluation and reporting remain problematic as outcomes from these processes are not easily accessible to the general public. There is need therefore, to implement Access to Information Law. In addition, both in the ODA and MGDS III, there is little involvement of CSOs in monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the development plans.</p>
Transparency and accountability	X		<p>Locally mobilized resources are abused at district and national levels through corruption, fraud and embezzlement. The situation has been worsened by late audits of accounts. Perpetrators of abuse of public funds, particularly those with political connections, have been treated leniently.</p> <p>Donor funds are also abused in a similar manner. There is need to revive the common budgetary support (CABS) so that audit is done on the donor funds to bring confidence to development partners and Malawians.</p> <p>Oversight institutions such as the Financial Intelligence Authority (FIA), Fiscal Police, Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), National Audit Office (NAO) and Directorate of Public Procurement and Disposal of Assets (DPPDA) are captured by political elites. There is need to detach these oversight institutions from the political executive to make them independent and effective.</p>

Aspect	Ratings	Reasons
Overall progress on this goal	X	<p>While Malawi is cooperating with several countries (south-north and south – south), the support is yielding limited results in as far transforming lives of Malawians is concerned. Malawi is still among the poorest countries despite getting support from its cooperating partners. Data collection remains problematic as evidenced by acute data gaps for monitoring the attainment of the SGD. To fill the data gap, the Malawi government should consider using unofficial data from local and international NGOs.</p> <p>On the other hand, accountability is challenging, as citizens are barely aware of how they can assist in implementing the targets around the SDG.</p>

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Malawi's development progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals has varied in the past five years. In a few of the goals, some improvements can be seen, but in the majority more needs to be done. The Government must prioritise implementation of the SDGs and the monitoring targets for Government programmes need to be aligned to, or amended to include, those of the SDGs. The Government must urgently re-organise its data processes and come up with a basis for measuring progress on the SDGs.

Government has a lot of good plans and strategies especially through the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy III. The Government has however, created a weak political environment where economic achievements have not been consolidated by the political situation. The passive performance of councillors in some district assemblies has further weakened the situation.

Among the donors, the SDGs are seen to be championed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). In reality donors also have a critical role to play in the SDG agenda. They need to release more resources for additional investments. Debt relief is just a first step. Additional resources are required if progress in achieving these MDGs is to be improved.

The SDGs have, however, exposed gaps in Government's ability to end poverty and this has contributed to increased civil society involvement in service provision, and growth of the civil society sector. SDGs have been or can be used as tools to build awareness, consensus, and alliance for national development and poverty eradication. SDGs, therefore, offer opportunities to harmonise the work of civil society where civil society organisations have a very big role to play as service providers and watchdogs and protectors of the rights of the poor.

The Civil Society in Malawi works in all areas addressed by the SDGs, though there is no uniform distribution of players among the various sectors. There are more Faith Based Organisations, for example, working on health, education, HIV/AIDS and food security. More NGOs work on HIV and AIDS, food security and gender, while a few are involved in environment, education and water. Most of the CSOs are involved in delivering services to the population, except for the few working in areas related to Goal 16 and 17, which advocate for more resource mobilisation and aid.

Comparing civil society receptiveness to the SDGs with that of Government departments, civil society activities seem to be catching up with the SDG campaign faster than the Government departments. Local CSOs however need to involve themselves more in SDGs, through strategic partnerships with international NGOs such as ActionAid, Oxfam, Care International, World Vision International, Save the Children and WaterAid which have already clearly aligned their activities and strategies to the SDGs.

SDGs have proved a yardstick for measuring progress in poverty reduction and several civil society networks have been born to lead in this particular monitoring work. Their campaign strategies and advocacy bases are more focused towards the SDGs, which can, in summary, be said to have legitimised the presence of such CSOs. A number of CSOs carry out surveys to get evidence on SDG progress, as tools for their campaigns. Even the CSO networks that track implementation of Government and donor activities have revisited their monitoring tools to include a vision of overcoming poverty in the near future and SDGs are an important reference point.

Malawian civil society organisations should continue to enhance their advocacy skills, based on relationships developed with the northern NGOs, in the context of the SDGs. The fact that international organisations operating in Malawi are more focused on SDGs than the local NGOs, has also opened learning windows between these groups.

It is clear that SDGs are little known to many people in Malawi. Even among civil servants, political and religious leaders mention of SDGs is often limited. There still remain many challenges that the Government has to overcome to achieve SDGs. For example allocations to SDG targets have been far below the international standards. Therefore, Government needs to continue with policy initiatives, strategies and programmes to address the following:

- a. Prioritising SDGs in its budget allocations by ensuring increased resource allocation to SDG related expenditures in the national budget and ensuring that such increased allocations are either in line with international commitments and recommendations or not. Economic growth generating sectors require due attention as well otherwise in the absence of remarkable economic growth rates, SDGs will be a dream. The international community should also scale up and fulfill aid commitments.
- b. Ensuring transparency, prudence and accountability in the utilisation of resources earmarked for SDG specific expenditures especially those targets where government has indicated that it will not achieve. These include maternal mortality and environmental sustainability.
- c. Ensuring political stability in order to woo both local and foreign investors so that more jobs are created and unemployment reduced.
- d. Strengthening political will in the fight against corruption at all levels of the public service and the society at large.
- e. Joining hands with civil society organisations to popularise SDGs and create the country's own priority list of SDGs and a time frame for achieving them within the overall international SDGs framework.

- f. Advocating for fair trade practices which have potential to boost foreign exchange and thus support the SDGs.
- g. Scaling up of efforts on areas that seem not to be achievable by 2030. Civil society should encourage participation of women and youth in decision making at local levels such as family, village and local assembly. Further civil society should consider making SDGs an election issue by encouraging people to support political parties that prioritize SDGs.
- h. Mobilising resources for mechanizing agriculture. So far a number of treadle pumps have been distributed to small scale farmers. There is need for price stabilisation policy of maize and other food items so as to attract large scale producers in commercial farming of maize. Large scale producers should well mechanise farming and ensure sustainability even in times of drought. If commercial players come in, Malawi's export base can be broadened by maize that has proven to be a tradable produce in the recent years. Commercial players will also fully exploit the irrigation potential the country has.

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