



Republic of Malawi

Social Support Policy

“Social Support: a Right for All”

2 January 2009



**HIS EXCELLENCY
DR. BINGU WA MUTHARIKA
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI**

FOREWORD

For quite some time it has been recognized in Malawi that most of the programmes formulated to target the ultra poor and vulnerable have failed to reach them. The ultra poor and vulnerable have been inevitably excluded from benefiting and taking full advantage of the economic development process no matter how extensive it has been.

Such groups of people include the most vulnerable like: the elderly, the chronically sick, orphans and other vulnerable children, persons with disabilities, and destitute families. This category of people is vulnerable to risk and typically lack appropriate risk management instruments, and this constrains them from engaging in higher return economic activities to enable them move out of chronic poverty. Their plight is often aggravated especially when they have adversely been affected by natural disasters such as floods and drought.

In this regard, the Government in collaboration with all potential stakeholders has come up with the National Social Support Policy. The Policy will facilitate the implementation of public and private programmes that will provide income or consumption transfers to the poor, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks, and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalised. The ultimate goal of the policy is to enhance the quality of life for those suffering from poverty and hunger, and improved resilience for those who are vulnerable to risks and shocks.

The Policy will also facilitate the implementation of the second theme in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy, which is Social Protection (which is now referred to as Social Support) and Disaster Risk Reduction, thereby contribute to Malawi's economic growth. Given that Social Support interventions have strong positive linkages with other economic and social policies including disaster risk reduction, I call upon all sectors involved for combined effort to implement the Policy and its Programmes. This strategic approach will allow us to surmount all strategic challenges in the way of improving the quality of life of the vulnerable and finally defeat poverty in Malawi.

Dr Ken Lipenga, MP
Minister of Economic Planning and Development

PREFACE

The formulation of this policy has evolved over a long period of time through elaborate participatory process. It presents an opportunity for proper coordination of programmes by Government that will target the moderate poor to enhance their productivity and the ultra poor for welfare support.

The policy is set to contribute towards the fight against extreme poverty and vulnerability. It thus lends itself to supporting the formulation and execution of programmes and projects that have long lasting positive impact for the ultra poor and the vulnerable. Commitments from all stakeholders are therefore much needed for the successful execution of the policy.

This policy has been developed through the contributions of public and private institutions and individuals, the Social Support Steering Committee, the Technical Committee, and the Working Group including the consultants who supported the process. These wide consultations have been very helpful in enriching this policy.

Finally, it is my sincere hope that the confidence invested in producing this policy, including the support from our co-operating partners will continue with the implementation of programmes.

Ted Sitima-wina
Secretary for Economic Planning and Development

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Minister of Economic Planning and Development, Dr Ken Lipenga, MP would like to accord special thanks to all who worked tirelessly during the formulation of this policy. This very important work involved many stakeholders, including several Government line Ministries, Civil Society Organisations, Development Partners, Academic Institutions, Members of Parliament, District Assemblies and some communities. Special acknowledgement must be made of the input from Consultants who worked with the Ministry during the formulation process, and of the special contribution of the Steering and the Technical Committees on Social Support that worked for over two years to develop this policy.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADC	Area Development Committee
AIDS	Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSSC	Community Social Support Committee
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DA	District Assembly
DfID	Department for International Development
DoDMA	Department of Disaster Management Affairs
EU	European Union
FBO	Faith Based Organisation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HBC	Home Based Care
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IGA	Income Generating Activity
IHS	Integrated Household Survey
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoAFS	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
MEGS	Malawi Economic Growth Strategy
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MoEP&D	Ministry of Economic Planning and Development
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoHP	Ministry of Health and Population
MoLG&RD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MVAC	Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee
NAC	National AIDS Commission
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSNP	National Safety Nets Programme
NSSSC	National Social Support Steering Committee
NSSTC	National Social Support Technical Committee
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSS	Psychosocial Support
PWP	Public Works Programmes
SLS	Savings and Loans Schemes
SS	Social Support
SSF	Social Support Fund
SSD	Social Support Division
TIP	Targeted Inputs Programme
UDHR	Universal Declaration on Human Rights

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UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US	United States
VDC	Village Development Committee
WB	World Bank
WMS	Welfare Monitoring Survey

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Social Support Policy is a medium term policy that has been formulated to contribute towards the reduction of poverty and vulnerability, in line with the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS), theme of Social Protection and Disaster Risk Reduction.

The policy has been developed as a prelude to programme development and provides a holistic framework for designing, implementing, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating social support interventions. It is envisaged that the implementation of a comprehensive social support policy, integrated with other pro-poor development policies, would also contribute significantly to Malawi's economic growth. The policy has linkages to the sectoral policies, Malawi Growth and Development Strategy, Vision 2020, the Malawi constitution and relevant international conventions.

The programmes developed from the policy will be implemented through the National Social Support Steering Committee, with the Ministry of Economic Planning & Development as its coordinating ministry and secretariat. At the local level, the Area Development Committees (ADCs) and Village Development Committees (VDCs) will work with Community Social Support Committees (CSPCs) to oversee targeting and implementation of social support activities. Civil Society organisations will complement Government in its efforts to reduce extreme poverty and vulnerability to risks of many Malawians.

Social Support interventions have strong positive linkages with other economic and social policies and with disaster risk reduction. These interventions will not infringe on or duplicate the established policies and programmes in the fields of social development, economic development and disaster risk management, but will complement these programmes.

There are **four** policy themes and these are:

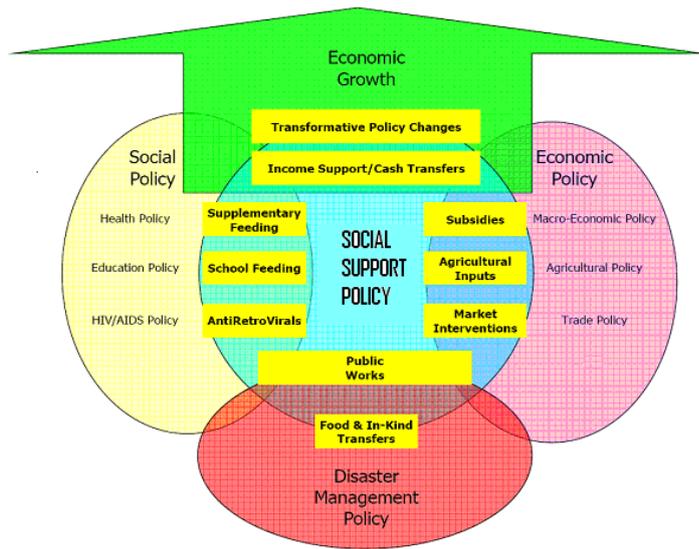
- 1) Welfare support
- 2) Protection of assets
- 3) Promotion through productivity enhancement
- 4) Policy linkages and mainstreaming.

The four themes constitute four policy areas, each of which outlines a Goal, Specific Objectives and Strategies. The objectives stated above provided guidance in the formulation of the strategies. The National Social Support Programme (NSPP) will therefore, be developed from the strategies contained in the policy.

The Government is committed to implementing a national Monitoring and

Evaluation system for the effective implementation of this Social Support Policy and programmes.

Figure 1: Social Support Programmes in Malawi



SECTION ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

It has increasingly been recognized in Malawi that the massive programmes being implemented by Government and major stakeholders designed to achieve sustainable economic growth and development on their own, will not in the short to medium term translate into improved quality of life for the ultra poor and vulnerable. The process of economic growth and development, due to its complex and competitive nature and insatiable demands for resource endowments to create wealth, invariably excludes a certain sector of the population from taking full advantage of benefits of economic growth.

Such groups of people include the most vulnerable like: the elderly, the chronically sick, orphans and other vulnerable children, persons with disabilities, and destitute families. These categories of people are vulnerable to risks and typically lack appropriate risk management instruments, and this constrains them from engaging in higher return economic activities to enable them to move out of chronic poverty (MGDS 2006-2011). Given this scenario, it has therefore, become necessary to design special programmes to address the plight of the vulnerable groups to allow them to fully participate in economic development and hence take advantage of the benefits of growth. Prior to the current efforts, Government together with stakeholders previously developed safety nets programmes to address the various risks affecting the most vulnerable groups. The efforts failed to reduce poverty and vulnerability mainly due to coordination problems, insufficient commitment by implementers and poor funding. These efforts have often times been compounded and aggravated by natural disasters such as flooding, dry spells, and droughts. Such occurrences have ultimately worsened the vulnerability position of the already disadvantaged sector of the population.

In view of these circumstances, the Government in collaboration with the donor community, civil society organizations, and the private sector will formulate a more improved and comprehensive Social Support Programme to reduce poverty and vulnerability in Malawi. As a prelude to such a programme, Government has decided to formulate a Social Support Policy which provides a holistic framework for designing, implementing, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating social support interventions.

For purposes of this policy, “social support” describes all public and private initiatives that provide income or consumption transfers to the poor, and protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks. Social Support also enhances the social status and the rights of the marginalized with the overall objective of

reducing ultra poverty as well as the economic and social vulnerability of the poor.

Section one of the Policy provides: the background, details of poverty and vulnerability in Malawi, the rationale, linkages with other policies and strategies and key challenges. Section two provides broad policy directions. Section three details the four policy themes and section four provides implementation arrangements. The glossary which defines technical terms in the policy appears under Appendix 1 on page 33. The implementation plan which is Appendix 2 on page 35 is the last item in the policy.

1.2 Poverty and Vulnerability in Malawi

Since 2004, Malawi has made great strides in reducing poverty and facilitating sustainable development. Incidence of poverty in terms of headcount index was 52.4% in 2005 (IHS 2005) and this had gone down to 40% by 2007 according to the Welfare Monitoring Survey (WMS 2007). With this trend, it is expected that in the new 2009 Integrated Household Survey, poverty head count will decline further.

The nation faces problems of both chronic poverty and vulnerability. A **poor** household is defined as a household that fails to attain a minimum acceptable consumption level of food and basic needs as defined by the poverty line (IHS 2005). According to the Malawi Poverty and Vulnerability Analysis (MPVA 2006), the key factors affecting the level of household poverty are household size, education, access to non-farm employment, access to irrigation, proximity to markets and trading centres, and access to good roads. However, none of the factors that characterize poverty in Malawi work in isolation. In addition to these, limited access to larger land holdings and failure to engage in cash crop production also contributes to the increase in household poverty.

The poor are categorised into ultra-poor (15%) and moderately poor (25%). The proportion of the ultra-poor has declined from 22% in 2005 (IHS 2005) to 15% by 2007 (WMS 2007). **Ultra-poor** households are those that have few or no assets, little or no land, limited or no labour, are chronically ill and are child/female/elderly headed with high dependency ratios. Most of these households are socially excluded, extremely vulnerable to shocks, have limited coping mechanisms and struggle for survival on a daily basis.

Moderately poor households are those that have some members who are able to do productive work. They can respond to labour-based projects and programmes in order to overcome their poverty and hunger. These households are vulnerable to risks and shocks like hunger and further impoverishment. Poverty is extremely dynamic, with individuals and households shifting frequently from one category to another, and even a small shock (for example a

poor harvest) can tip large numbers of “non-poor” into poverty.

Vulnerability is defined as the inability of households to deal with shocks to their livelihoods. Rising vulnerability implies both an increasing likelihood of shocks taking place, and a declining ability to overcome shocks without experiencing livelihood collapse. Vulnerabilities affecting Malawi at national level include:

- Agricultural vulnerability (i.e. erratic rainfall, land constraints, lack of livestock and constrained access to fertilisers, inputs and credit);
- Economic shocks and processes (undiversified livelihoods, weak markets, interactions between transitory shocks and chronic poverty);
- Health and nutrition risks (unsafe water, poor eating habits and limited access to health services) and HIV & AIDS; and
- Demographic vulnerability (high population growth, increasing numbers of households headed by women, children or the elderly).

Vulnerability in Malawi is often the joint effect of these factors, rather than any single factor taken on its own, that add up to greater risk and less ability to deal with shocks. Failure to recover sufficiently from past shocks (such as the 2001/02 food crisis), has had the effect of depleting household assets, and households’ ability to rebuild assets.

1.3 Rationale

In order to address chronic poverty and vulnerability, the Government developed the National Safety Nets Strategy (NSNS) in 2000 and National Safety Nets Programme (NSNP) under the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy in 2002. The NSNP consisted of four sub programmes: the Public Works Programme, the Targeted Nutrition Programme, the Targeted Inputs Programme and Direct Welfare Transfers Programme.

The key objective of the NSNP was to reduce poverty and vulnerability of the poor and most vulnerable. However, it encountered a number of shortfalls that include, capacity constraints, ad hoc and uncoordinated implementation of programmes by stakeholders, inadequate funding and inherent programme design problems which failed to impact on reducing poverty and vulnerability. These shortfalls were compounded by the lack of a policy to guide stakeholders in implementing programmes and projects to meaningfully reduce poverty and vulnerability.

To address these weaknesses, the Government and other stakeholders agreed on the need to shift from safety nets to social support. Social Protection (which is now referred to as Social Support) and Disaster Risk Reduction is the second theme in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS). The MGDS represents a nationally owned strategy for investing in both economic

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growth and social development, and serves as the basis for coordinating all socio-economic and development activities. The MGDS was approved by the Government in October 2006, and is the successor to the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy (MPRS).

The National Social Support Policy provides a holistic framework for designing, implementing, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating social support interventions. The **rationale** for this is that a comprehensive social support policy:

1. Takes a broad perspective, and looks at poverty and vulnerability in an integrated and coordinated manner;
2. Gives priority to reducing ultra poverty;
3. Emphasises long term, predictable interventions;
4. Contributes to asset creation and support;
5. Strengthens human capital, thereby helping to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty;
6. Increases economic activities through market strengthening and income generation;
7. Is redistributive and reduces income inequality;
8. Directly provides transfers to those that can not support themselves, thereby directly tackling destitution;
9. Fosters social and political stability; and
10. Supports fulfilment of human rights and freedoms.

The implementation of a comprehensive social support policy, integrated with other pro-poor development policies, would also contribute significantly to Malawi's **economic growth**. Experience from other countries, both in southern Africa and beyond, confirms that social support, far from being a drain on resources, is a driver of economic growth. In addition to reducing poverty, a sound social support policy promotes equity, stimulates growth and ensures better use of fiscal resources. It does this through:

- Promoting human capital formation, and raising labour productivity;
- Enabling the poor to protect themselves and their assets against shocks, thus defending their long-term income-generating potential;
- Encouraging investment by reducing risk through the predictability of transfers;
- Combating discrimination and unlocking economic potential;
- Supporting the participation of the poor in labour markets, by reducing the risk involved in searching for jobs;
- Stimulating demand for local goods and services and thereby supporting enterprises in rural areas through economic multipliers;

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- Helping to create an effective and secure state by fostering social cohesion and promoting a sense of citizenship; and
- Reinforcing conditions to attract local and foreign investment that will further contribute to stable and conducive macro-economic environment.

The **purposes** of the Social Support Policy are to:

- Define strategies to improve the socio-economic status of the poor and vulnerable;
- Provide reference guidelines to all stakeholders in the design, implementation and monitoring of social support programmes and processes;
- Provide guidelines for cost-effective, predictable, and sustainable interventions to the benefit of beneficiaries, implementers and financiers;
- Provide guidelines for resource mobilisation and allocation; and
- Establish an institutional framework with the mandate to initiate, coordinate, implement, monitor and evaluate national social support programmes.

1.4 Linkages with Other Relevant International Conventions, National Policies and Strategies

1.4.1 Links with Relevant International Conventions

Malawi is a signatory to a number of relevant international instruments, conventions and declarations that promote principles of social support. These include the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Livingstone Call for Action on Social Protection (Zambia, March 2006).

1.4.2 Links with the Constitution of Malawi

Social Support has bearings in the Malawi Constitution under articles 30, 37 and 43. Article 30 which provides for “right to development” and stipulates that;

“All persons and people have a right to development and therefore to the enjoyment of economic, social, cultural and political development and women, children and the disabled in particular shall be given special consideration in the application of this right.” It further states that the “state shall take all necessary measures for the realization of the right to development.” Articles 37 and 43 provide for the “right of access to all information held by the state” and “administrative justice” respectively.

1.4.3 Links with Malawi Growth Development Strategy

At national level, social protection is the second Theme of the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS), which states that: ‘*The long term goal of the MGDS within the sphere of Social Protection is to improve the life of the most vulnerable*’, while ‘*the medium-term expected outcome is to increase assets of the poor to enable them to meaningfully engage in sustainable growth and contribute to poverty reduction.*’ The MGDS advances the following key strategies to empower the poor and the most vulnerable:

- Providing efficient and effective support to the poor and the most vulnerable with very limited factors of production;
- Improving planning and integration of knowledge on the needs of the chronically poor;
- Providing opportunities for the poor farmers and rural communities to graduate from poverty by facilitating their integration in mainstream agricultural productivity and enabling them to create wealth;
- Promoting savings culture in Public Works Programmes (PWP); and
- Providing capital for income generating activities.

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While the MGDS functions as the national development framework, the Social Support Policy is an integral part of the MGDS. This ensures that poor households receive more attention than was given to them in the past. The MGDS also facilitates the integration of social support interventions with interventions in other policy areas.

1.4.4 Links with other Sector Policies

Social Support interventions have strong positive linkages with other economic and social policies and with disaster risk reduction. These policies include: HIV & AIDS; Youth; Food Security; Gender; Orphans & Vulnerable Children; Reproductive Health; Early Childhood Care and Development; Environment; Land; Equalisation of Opportunities (Disability); Decentralisation; and other relevant programmes in agriculture, education, health and labour. Through synergies with these policies, social support will contribute to asset creation, protection and income generation; strengthen human capital and stimulate economic activities; promote social empowerment, reduce income inequality and break the intergenerational cycle of poverty; ensure social and political stability and fulfilment of human rights and freedoms.

It is important to note that the Vision and Goal of the Social support Policy will only be achieved through a combination of policies that complement and reinforce each other. The Social Support Policy will not infringe on or duplicate the established policies and programmes in the field of social development, economic development and disaster risk management, but will complement them as depicted in Figure 1 on page 11.

1.5 Key Challenges and Barriers

This Policy is bound to face several challenges and barriers in the course of implementation. One existing challenge is the unavailability of adequate data that could be used for planning interventions for ultra poor and vulnerable households. This is partly due to weak institutional set ups. This challenge will be addressed through strengthening of institutional set ups at national and district levels.

In addition to this, limited funding poses a great challenge and risk. Social Support programmes require a substantial amount of financial resources which Government may not be able to solely fund. Government would be required to negotiate with the donor community, the private sector and civil society organisations to mobilize adequate financial support.

Furthermore, human capacity limitations also pose a great risk with regard to planning and implementation. Government with support from development partners would need to ensure that all key positions at national and

district level are filled and that consultants and analysts are hired.

1.6 Guiding Principles

1.6.1 Leadership

Government is the custodian of the policy. Government should therefore ensure that there is coordination and alignment by all partners and that there is long-term support, including contributions from non-state actors.

1.6.2 Needs and evidence-based

Social Support must be based on evidence and analysis of who needs what type of assistance, when, for how long, where and why, and the impact it would have on peoples' lives and livelihoods. Social Support programmes should be designed based on peoples' needs and not by instruments and should include an analysis of the effectiveness of alternative interventions.

1.6.3 Beneficiary preferences prioritised

Beneficiaries should be consulted and involved in the design, planning and implementation of social support interventions.

1.6.4 Support and promotion of secure livelihoods

Social Support should encompass provision for the ultra-poor, as well as support and promote interventions that aim at helping the poor graduate out of poverty, and reduce their vulnerability to risks and livelihood shocks.

1.6.5 Tackling social exclusion and marginalisation

Social Support should address social as well as economic vulnerabilities, by protecting disempowered individuals such as vulnerable women, men and children, people with disabilities, the elderly and households affected by HIV and AIDS against discrimination and exploitation.

1.6.6 Timely, harmonised and reliable

Social Support interventions should be delivered across the country in a timely, reliable, well-coordinated and sustainable manner.

1.6.7 Rights and responsibilities

Social Support should promote the progressive realisation of human rights as articulated in Malawi's constitution (Cap 4, Sec 30, 37, 43) and other relevant national and international legal instruments.

1.6.8 Accountable and transparent

Social Support should be transparent, incorporating principles of accurate and timely dissemination of information; publicity of instances involving abuse

of the system; disclosure of the contract terms and unit costs of Government, NGO or private agencies selected to administer social support interventions; and should be transparent in the procurement of social support services.

1.6.9 Common financial management, reporting and monitoring and evaluation guidelines

Government agencies and partners involved in social support should commit to a common set of financial management, audit, progress, monitoring and evaluation and reporting processes, consistent with national and international guidelines and indicators.

1.6.10 Sustainable, long-term funding

Government and partners should be committed to reliable funding of social support, using appropriate mechanisms (basket funding) that provide predictable and institutionalised funding under Government control and which can be sustained over the long term.

SECTION TWO

2.0 BROAD POLICY DIRECTIONS

2.1 Definition of Social Support

Social Support is defined as all public and private initiatives that provide income or consumption transfers to the poor, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks, and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalised, with the overall objective of reducing ultra poverty as well as the economic and social **vulnerability** of poor and marginalised groups.

2.2 Vision

Enhanced quality of life for those suffering from poverty and hunger and improved resilience for those who are vulnerable to risks and shocks.

2.3 Mission

To provide and promote productivity-enhancing interventions and welfare support for the poor and vulnerable, thereby facilitating movement of people out of poverty and reducing the vulnerability of those in danger of falling into poverty.

2.4 Overall Goal of the Policy

The overall goal of the Policy shall be to reduce poverty and enable the poor to move out of poverty and vulnerability.

2.5 Objectives of the Policy

The objectives of the Policy are as follows:

- To provide welfare support to those that are unable to construct a viable livelihood;
- To protect the assets and improve the resilience of poor and vulnerable households;
- To increase the productive capacity and asset base of poor and vulnerable households to move them above the poverty line; and
- To establish coherent and progressive social support synergies by ensuring strong positive linkages to influence economic and social policies, and disaster risk management.

SECTION THREE

3.0 POLICY THEMES

The Policy is built around four key thematic areas that have consolidated the aspirations contained in the vision, mission and in the guidelines. These thematic areas are as follows:

- Provision of Welfare Support
- Protection of Assets
- Promotion through Productivity Enhancement, and
- Policy Linkages and Mainstreaming

It is recognised that coherent and progressive social support interventions have strong positive linkages with other economic and social policies, and with disaster risk management – and, through synergies with these policies, can contribute to economic growth. Social Support interventions will not infringe on or duplicate the established policies and programmes in the fields of social development, economic development and disaster risk management, but will complement these programmes. The fourth policy area encompasses these linkages.

3.1 Theme 1: Provision of Welfare Support

Policy Statement

Welfare support constitutes interventions to meet the most pressing needs of the very poorest members of society such as elderly, infirm, persons with disabilities, chronically ill and Orphans and other Vulnerable Children (OVC) living in households with no adults fit for productive work. Such support should ensure access to the basic goods and services required for their survival (consumption needs such as food, clothing, blankets, soap, shelter, water and sanitation, basic health services and transport) and access to basic education (investment in human capital). In addition, some households (or individuals excluded from households, such as orphans, widows living alone, street children) require access to home based care and psychosocial support.

The principal difficulty is that the poorest households are often unable to provide labour for productive activity and are, therefore, unable to earn a living. Most of the interventions targeting such households do not reach them. The poorest are socially excluded (e.g. shyness, sickness and extreme poverty) and they cannot find time to attend community meetings since they are always

looking for food and other necessities. The few interventions that reach them are by chance and only for a short period of time. This policy area will ensure that direct assistance is provided to the intended beneficiary households.

3.1.0 Policy Area 1: Goal

To provide welfare support to those who are unable to construct a viable livelihood.

3.1.1 Policy Area 1: Specific Objective

To provide welfare support to uplift the livelihoods of those who are unable to support themselves, have limited factors of production, and lack family and community support.

Strategy

- Provide predictable transfers such as cash, shelter or food.

3.2 Theme 2: Protection of Assets

Policy Statement

This policy area will focus on supporting poor and vulnerable households to protect their assets from depletion and erosion thereby building resilience over time. Given adequate support, such households can graduate out of poverty and can eventually start to contribute to socio-economic development.

A considerable proportion of social support is concerned with preventing the erosion of assets that occurs when families or communities are hit by shocks. The policy will provide households in this category with fallback positions when they run into difficulty. It will also provide them with sufficient income to ensure that they do not compromise their future ability to thrive due to short-term shocks.

3.2.0 Policy Area 2: Goal

To protect the assets and improve the resilience of poor and vulnerable households.

3.2.1 Policy Area 2: Specific Objective

To prevent asset erosion of poor and vulnerable households.

Strategies

- Implement Public works programme, at a wage indexed to the cost of living, consolidated eventually into a national employment guarantee scheme; and
- Implement Social insurance schemes (e.g. community-based health

insurance, burial societies and insurance schemes for livestock loss)

3.3 Theme 3: Promotion through Productivity Enhancement

Policy Statement

This policy theme will mostly be targeted at the poor and vulnerable households who need some support that will enable them to increase their income and accumulate assets. These households, which have some labour and productive assets, need productivity enhancing interventions that significantly add value to their assets and improve their incomes. They have the potential to be integrated into a well functioning economic and social environment.

Ongoing social and economic interventions that aim at general social and economic growth will have to be complemented initially by social support interventions aimed at the poor and vulnerable, to ensure that such households graduate out of poverty, and in turn eventually contribute to economic growth.

3.3.0 Policy Area 3: Goal

To increase the productive capacity and asset base of poor and vulnerable households to move them above the poverty line.

3.3.1 Policy Area 3: Specific Objective

To enable households to lift themselves out of poverty by increasing their productivity and building their assets.

Strategies

- Implement Vouchers, pass on programmes and input subsidies/cash transfers to enable the poorest (agricultural) households to access agricultural inputs;
- Implement Public works programmes – longer term, inflation-adjusted higher wage, predictable and guaranteed, based on creation of valuable community/household assets (e.g. irrigation, dam construction, afforestation, nutrition gardens, and home-based care), using appropriate technologies and linked to skills building;
- Promote village savings and loans programmes, and cooperatives; and
- Implement conditional cash transfers (e.g. cash-for-assets – where beneficiary households accumulate productive assets)

3.4 Theme 4: Policy Linkages and Mainstreaming

Policy Statement

Some causes of poverty and certain forms of vulnerability are related to social exclusion and marginalisation, rather than only to livelihood shocks such

as drought or illness – though economic and social vulnerabilities often act to reinforce each other. For groups affected by social exclusion and discrimination (such as widows, the chronically ill and people stigmatised with HIV & AIDS, orphans and other vulnerable children and disabilities), changes in policy, rights-based campaigning or enforcement of socially progressive policies might be sufficient to transform the conditions of their lives. Taking this aspect into account has the advantage of addressing the underlying causes of vulnerability, while being less expensive and more sustainable than over-reliance on economic interventions alone.

Therefore, this policy area will support initiatives that aim at transforming, through policy change, the living conditions of those who are socially excluded and marginalised through empowering them with policies, systems, legislative and administrative means that protect such disempowered groups against discrimination and exploitation.

3.4.0 Policy Area 4: Goal

To establish coherent and progressive social support synergies by ensuring strong positive linkages to influence economic and social policies, and disaster risk management.

3.4.1 Policy Area 4: Specific Objective 1

To ensure that the poor and the vulnerable have access to social services.

Strategy

- Key ministries and stakeholders collaborating in the social sector to ensure that all the poor and vulnerable access social services e.g. child care support, protection from abuse and exploitation, access to justice, access to school, access to treatment for people living with HIV&AIDS, Early Childhood Development and treatment from malnutrition.

3.4.2 Policy Area 4: Specific Objective 2

To ensure that the poor and the vulnerable engage in economic activities.

Strategy

- Collaborating with key ministries and other stakeholders in the economic sector to provide opportunities for all the poor and vulnerable to participate in economic activities and contribute to economic growth; and

3.4.3 Policy Area 4: Specific Objective 3

To ensure that disaster risk management initiatives give priority to the needs of the poor and the vulnerable.

Strategies

Collaborate with key ministries and other stakeholders:

- To ensure that all the poor and vulnerable benefit from improved access to disaster risk management strategies; and
- To establish early warning systems for Malawi through Vulnerability Assessment; and
- To integrate disaster risk management into sustainable development planning at all levels.

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SECTION FOUR

4.0 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Institutional Arrangements

4.1.1 National Social Support Steering Committee

The Ministry of Economic Planning & Development will be the coordinating agency and secretariat for the National Social Support Programme (NSPP). The Ministry will strive to harmonise the implementation of the policy and programme with the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development through the establishment of integrated institutions at the District Assembly and community levels.

The National Social Support Steering Committee (NSSSC) comprising principal secretaries from the key line ministries, heads of missions for the development partner institutions, and civil society (CONGOMA) will be responsible for matters of policy and resource mobilization. The NSSSC is chaired by the Chief Secretary to the President and Cabinet. The full membership is as follows:

1. Chief Secretary (Chair)
2. Secretary for Agriculture and Food Security
3. Secretary and Commissioner for Disaster Management Affairs
4. Secretary for Local Government and Rural Development
5. Secretary to the Treasury
6. Secretary for Health
7. Secretary for Labour
8. Secretary for Transport and Public Works
9. Secretary for Women and Child Development
10. Secretary for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly
11. Secretary for Nutrition, HIV and AIDS
12. Secretary for Irrigation and Water Development
13. Secretary for Education
14. The Country Manager, The World Bank
15. The Head of the Department for International Development (DFID)
16. Representative of UNICEF
17. Council for the Non-Governmental Organization of Malawi (CONGOMA)
18. Secretary for Economic Planning and Development (Secretariat)

4.1.2 National Social Support Technical Committee

The National Social Support Technical Committee (NSSTC) will be responsible for providing technical direction and recommendations on programme implementation. The NSSTC comprises of Directors and is chaired by Secretary for Economic Planning and Development. The full membership is as follows:

1. Ministry of Economic Planning and Development (Chair and Secretariat)
2. Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
3. Department of Disaster Management Affairs
4. Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
5. Ministry of Finance
6. Ministry of Health
7. Ministry of Transport and Public Works
8. Ministry of Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly
9. Department of Nutrition, HIV and AIDS
10. Ministry of Irrigation and Water Development
11. Ministry of Labour and Social Development
12. Ministry of Information and Civic Education
13. Ministry of Women and Child Development
14. Office of the President and Cabinet
15. Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF)
16. Council for the Non-Governmental Organisations of Malawi (CONGOMA)
17. The World Bank
18. The Department of International Development (DFID)
19. UNICEF
20. World Food Programme (WFP)
21. Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC)
22. Executive Director, Elderly People Association
23. The Executive Director, Network of Organisations working with Vulnerable and Orphaned Children (NOVOC)
24. Chairperson, NGO Gender Network
25. Centre for Social Research (CSR)
26. National AIDS Commission (NAC)
27. Action Aid
28. OXFAM
29. Plan Malawi

4.1.3 Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (District Assemblies)

The District Assemblies will be responsible for coordinating and implementing social support activities at the district level, together with Civil Society Organisations. The District Assemblies will therefore, coordinate all the implementing partners including government sectors and the Civil Society. At the local level, Area Development Committees (ADC) and Village Development Committees (VDC) will work with Community Social Support Committees to oversee targeting and implementation of social support activities. It is expected that ADCs and VDCs will form Social Support Subcommittees.

4.1.4 Ministry of Economic Planning and Development

The Ministry of Economic Planning and Development will provide leadership in the programming and delivery of Social Support programmes. However, all programmes will envisage partnerships between Government, civil society and the private sector at all levels. CSO, NGO and other public institutions will complement Government efforts in the implementation of the policy and programmes. The following will be the functions of the MEP&D:

1. Serving as secretariat for the National Social Support Steering Committee (NSSSC), and the National Social Support Technical Committee (NSSTC). Specific tasks include ensuring regular meetings are held and that invitations, minutes of meetings and other relevant documents are shared in a timely manner;
2. Developing and overseeing the implementation of the Social Support work plan and budget with approval from the technical committee;
3. Coordinating monitoring and evaluation activities of the different social support components at different levels and providing required data to the MGDS monitoring system and social support committees;
4. Maintaining a (preferably geo-referenced) database and catalogue of social support activities;
5. Undertaking public information, education and communications campaigns (including web-based Internet fora);
6. Assessing priorities to allocation of available resources between districts and programme components in liaison with the technical committee;
7. Recommending “best practice” guidelines and identifying gaps for social support components, and undertaking pilots through agreement with the technical committee;
8. Coordinating activities of a cross-cutting nature, e.g. non-state actors involvement, targeting, gender issues, impact of HIV and AIDS and ensuring that linkages exist;
9. Providing training and advice to the districts to ensure consistency of approach in targeting and distribution of resources;

10. Coordinating the technical sub-committees of the NSSTC, to facilitate lesson-learning for district staff, implementing partners, government and donors ; and
11. Developing transparency and accountability mechanisms between, and for, all stakeholders.

4.2 Funding Arrangements

A Social Support Fund (SSF) will be created, using a basket funding mechanism. The sources of funding will include:

- Government budget;
- Long-term, guaranteed contributions from development partners;
- NGO contribution; and
- Private sector contributions.

The SSF will be managed by the MoEP&D and the approval of disbursement of the funds will be done by the NSSSC based on programmes recommended by the NSSTC. However actual disbursement of funds to implementers, for example Districts Assemblies, will be done directly by the Ministry of Finance.

4.2.1 Parallel funding

NGOs and other institutions that are not allowed to put their resources in a basket fund will be allowed to implement projects as long as they adhere to implementation plans and design for Social Support programmes and do not duplicate other efforts.

4.3 Implementation Plan

Social support programmes are implemented by a number of stakeholders amongst which are; Governments institutions, NGOs, the private Sector, UN organisations, development partners and the Civil Society. The Government, led by the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, will develop the National Social Support Programme (NSSP) with the members represented in the National Social Support Technical Committee. The programmes will be developed with all relevant stakeholders.

The NSSP will be included as an appendix to the Policy. As one of the themes of the MGDS, progress made in the domain of social support will be reviewed annually. At the end of the MGDS in 2011, an independent evaluation of the NSPP will be carried out to assess the impact of the NSSP on the lives of the poor and vulnerable in a meaningful manner. In preparation for this, a baseline for the evaluation will be conducted by the end of 2009.

The implementation plan for the Policy will be in the form of an action

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programme that is derived from the main Policy document and appears as Appendix 2 to the Policy. The Action Programme is presented in a tabular format for ease of implementation, monitoring and review. Specific objectives have been highlighted to ensure that there is focus on what each component of the policy aims to achieve. Each objective is linked to one or more strategies, clearly indicating how the objective will be achieved within a specific timeframe, subject to periodic review.

This Action Programme will operationalize the statements contained in the Social Support Policy by aiming to achieve the overall goal and objectives, and by implementing the strategies and actions in line with the MGDS. Within the context of available resources, design and implementation of social support interventions should prioritise the poorest. Existing informal community initiatives should be taken into account when designing the programmes.

As formal social support is new to Malawi, some social support instruments may need to be designed, piloted, and evaluated, before being brought to full scale if proven viable.

4.4 Information, Education & Communication

Promotion of social support programmes will be based on an Information, Education and Communication (IEC) strategy that will guide how the population will learn about social support and respective programmes. Information will be shared through collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Civic Education (MoI&CE), the electronic and print media, presentations at national, regional and global fora. Also education and information sessions will be held at district and community levels.

4.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

4.5.1 Means of monitoring

The Government commits to implementing a national monitoring and evaluation system for implementation of this Social Support Policy. In particular this system will address:

- (i) Efficient use of available resources (cost-effectiveness);
- (ii) Effective coordination of relevant partners to implement social support programmes;
- (iii) Ensuring that key stakeholders and implementing partners have sufficient capacity to carry out monitoring and evaluation activities; and
- (iv) Progress in reducing vulnerability to hunger and poverty by assisting the ultra-poor graduate from their condition, protecting the moderately poor and the non-poor from falling into poverty and ultra-poverty – the

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specific objectives described in Section 2 – will be monitored using the following sources with additional indices and analyses to include references to the different poverty groups:

- Integrated Household Survey;
- Core Welfare Indicator Survey;
- VAC analysis and reports; and
- Annual and monthly reports from relevant programmes

The Government will coordinate and lead the monitoring and evaluation process and ensure timely reporting and dissemination of results. A Social Support Monitoring and Evaluation Report covering the above assessment areas will be published annually. All agencies implementing programmes related to this Policy will report periodically to the respective coordinating body.

The Government will commission an independent assessment of implementation of this Social Support Policy following publication of the annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report. The findings of the independent assessment will be discussed at an annual Stakeholders Meeting.

The Monitoring and Evaluation results will be used to inform policymakers, programme implementers and donors to directly influence programme planning and design processes as well as resource management.

Monitoring and Evaluation tools for respective social support programmes will be harmonised, utilising a common reporting format. The Government will devise this common reporting format based upon the Government of Malawi Monitoring and Evaluation System Master Plan.

4.6 Review of the Policy

This Policy will be reviewed in 2011 and thereafter in 2013 after monitoring key milestones and targets. The review will be coordinated by the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Glossary

Conditional/unconditional transfers:

In this text **conditional** transfers are provided to beneficiaries on condition that they fulfil some requirement, such as participating in public works programmes or cash/food for work, or attendance at health clinics or schools. **Unconditional** transfers are provided to beneficiaries without any such requirement. Both conditional and unconditional transfers may be targeted or universal.

Hazard:

A shock such as drought, flood, conflict or market dysfunction, which is likely to have a negative impact on people's **livelihoods**

Household:

A group of people, each with different abilities and needs, who live together most of the time and contribute to a common economy, and share the food and other income from this.

Livelihood:

The sum of the ways in which people make a living and meet their basic needs.

Poor:

Households that fail to attain a minimum acceptable consumption level of food and basic needs as defined in the Integrated Household Survey (IHS 2005). Using income as a proxy, the poverty line is set at a daily expenditure of MK44.4 per person, (using 2005 prices). The coming 2008 IHS will indicate more MK per person as falling below the poverty line due to mainly cumulative annual inflation. However, the headcount is expected to be below 40% as opposed to the last 2005 IHS poverty headcount that was estimated at 52.4% of the population.

Poverty:

In general, Malawians characterise poverty "*...as a state of continuous deprivation or a lack of basics of life.*"¹ Basic needs include economic, social, psychological and physiological requirements. Poverty, therefore, has many dimensions including income poverty and human or capability poverty. Poverty exists, and is observable, at various levels: at the individual, household,

¹ Government of Malawi and United Nations Development Programme (1993) *Situation Analysis of Poverty in Malawi*

community and national levels, and has a gender dimension. Qualitative², information from the poor themselves also defines poverty in terms of lack of felt basic needs at household and community level.

Risk:

The likelihood of a shock or **hazard** that results in **vulnerability**.

Social Support:

Social Support describes all public and private initiatives that provide income or consumption transfers to the poor, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks, and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalised, with the overall objective of reducing ultra poverty as well as the economic and social **vulnerability** of poor, vulnerable and marginalised groups.

Ultra-poor:

Households that fail to attain a minimum acceptable consumption of food, and are not able to purchase essential non-food items (e.g. soap, clothing, school utensils), as defined by the ultra-poverty line in IHS 2005. In Malawi, this ultra-poverty line was set at a daily expenditure of MK27 per person; on this basis the ultra-poverty headcount was estimated at 22% of the population. The daily expenditure for the upcoming 2008 IHS will certainly be higher than MK27 per person, but this will be associated with an ultra-poverty headcount below 15%, as both the poverty headcount and the ultra-poverty headcount continue to decline.

Vulnerability:

The inability of households to deal with shocks to their **livelihoods**. Rising vulnerability implies an increasing likelihood of **hazards** taking place (risk), or a declining ability to overcome shocks without experiencing **livelihood** collapse.

² Government of Malawi (2000) *Qualitative Impact Monitoring of poverty Alleviation Policies and Programmes: World Bank (1999) Voices of the Poor*.

Appendix 2: Implementation Plan

Policy theme 1: Provision of Welfare Support

Goal	Specific objective	Strategy	Responsibility for implementation	Timeframe
3.1.0 To provide welfare support to those who are unable to construct a viable livelihood.	3.1.1 To provide welfare support to uplift the livelihoods of those who are unable to support themselves, have limited factors of production, and lack family and community support.	3.1.1.1 Provide predictable transfers such as cash, shelter or food.	MoWCD MoLG&RD District Assemblies Civil Society	2009-2011

Policy Area 2: Protection of Assets

Goal	Specific objective	Strategies	Responsibility for implementation	Timeframe
<p>3.2.0 To protect the assets and improve the resilience of poor and vulnerable households.</p>	<p>3.2.1 To prevent asset erosion of poor and vulnerable households.</p>	<p>3.2.11. Public works, at a wage indexed to the cost of living, consolidated eventually into a national employment guarantee scheme; 2. Social insurance schemes (e.g. community-based health insurance; burial societies and insurance schemes for livestock loss)</p>	<p>MoWCD MoLG&RD DAs Civil Society</p>	<p>2009-2011</p>

Policy Area 3: Promotion through Productivity Enhancement

Goal	Specific objective	Strategies	Responsibility for implementation	Timeframe
<p>3.3 To increase the productive capacity and asset base of poor and vulnerable households to move them above the poverty line.</p>	<p>3.3.1 To enable households to lift themselves out of poverty by increasing their productivity and building their assets</p>	<p>3.3.1. 1. Vouchers/cash transfers to enable the poorest (agricultural) households to access agricultural inputs; 2. Public works programmes –longer term, inflation-adjusted higher wage, predictable and guaranteed, based on creation of valuable community/household assets (e.g. irrigation, nutrition gardens, home-based care), using appropriate technologies and linked to skills building; 3. Village savings and loans programmes; 4. Conditional cash transfers (e.g. cash-for-assets)</p>	<p>MoWCD MoLG&RD DAs Civil Society</p>	<p>2009-2011</p>

Policy Area 4: Policy Linkages and Mainstreaming

Goal	Specific objective	Strategies	Responsibility for implementation	Timeframe
<p>3.4 To establish coherent and progressive social support synergies by ensuring strong positive linkages to influence economic and social policies, and disaster management.</p>	<p>3.4.1 To ensure that the poor and the vulnerable have access to social services.</p>	<p>3.4.1. Collaboration with key ministries and other stakeholders in the social sector to ensure that all the poor and vulnerable access social services e.g. child care support, protection from abuse and exploitation, access to justice, access to school, access to treatment for people living with HIV&AIDS, Early Childhood Development, treatment from malnutrition.</p>	<p>MoEP&D</p>	<p>2009-2011</p>
	<p>3.4.2 To ensure that the poor and the vulnerable engage in economic activities.</p>	<p>Collaboration with key ministries and other stakeholders in the economic sector to provide opportunities for all the poor and vulnerable to participate in economic activities and contribute to economic growth</p>	<p>MoEP&D</p>	<p>2009-2011</p>

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	3.4.3 To ensure that disaster risk management initiatives give priority to the needs of the poor and the vulnerable.	Collaboration with key ministries and other stakeholders in the disaster management sector to ensure that all the poor and vulnerable benefit from improved access to disaster management strategies	MoEP&D DoDMA	2009 - 2011
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