

# GROWING INCOME AND NUTRITIONAL POVERTY AN ISSUE OF SOCIAL CONCERN

CfSC AUGUST 2012 PRESS STATEMENT



That most Malawians are suffering from the effects of income and nutritional poverty in the face of the ensuing economic downturn is not an overstatement. Since the Malawi economy started to show signs of a serious slowdown, a high percentage of struggling households have plunged into extreme poverty and as a consequence their household incomes are inadequate to meet the cost of basic food and essential non-food items. This is clear testimony of the depth of poverty in the country.

According to Centre for Social Concern (CfSC) Rural Basic Needs Basket - a quarterly survey that measures nutritional poverty and social service delivery in selected rural districts of Malawi that include Chikwawa, Lilongwe rural, Zomba rural and Dedza continues to reflect serious income and nutritional deficiencies. The 2012 CfSC fourth quarter Rural Basic Needs Basket (Rural BNB) indicates serious failure by most households to meet key nutritional requirements deviating significantly from the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommended standards for an individual to lead a healthy and dignified life. For instance, the average energy intake in this quarter shows that most households are consuming approximately 1892 kilocalories falling far below the WHO recommended 2400 kilocalorie threshold for a rural setting. Such a deficit presents multiple developmental challenges especially to growing children – with the prospects of having a negative lifelong impact.

**Table 1: Portraying Calorie Intake and Household Income in CfSC Rural BNB Study Areas.**

Study Area	Kilocalories	Calorie Deficit	Household Income
Lilongwe – Kasiya	1192	1208	K5, 295.00
Dedza - Mayani	1974	426	K6, 028.00
Zomba-Chingale	1659	741	K5, 026.00
Chikwawa-TA Maseya	2743	(343)	K11, 793.00

The National Statistical Office (NSO) Integrated Household Survey report (HIS, 2010-2012) also reveals that 30.6% of 6 to 59 months old children in Malawi are underweight. Indeed, nutritional poverty continues to be reflected by the unacceptably high chronic malnutrition rates currently standing at a national average of 1% (severe) and 11.4% (moderate) for 6 to 59 months old children being stunted. Furthermore, over 76% of households in our Rural BNB study areas failed to meet the cost of essential non-food items. Although most households in rural Malawi produce their own food, the above statistics means that households in those rural areas are not only nutritionally poor but also income impoverished – a fact reflected by their failure to meet the cost of essential non food items like bathing soap, among others.

In view of the above developments, CfSC reasserts the need to see nutritional and income poverty being actively addressed especially in rural communities. One of the ways this could be done is through more regular collection of information on rural poverty and its timely dissemination to relevant stakeholders at different levels to aid in the design and implementation of rural programmes that seek to address this issue. Although policy pronouncements are important as a starting point for sustainable responses, government should go beyond policy prescriptions to implementation of strategies and programmes. Stakeholders in the rural development agenda should recognise that nutrition is not just about food. To make the necessary change in lives of Malawians affected by nutritional poverty thus requires concerted and broad multi-sectoral approach. This concerted response needs the full engagement of affected communities, working closely with relevant government ministries especially at the local level. Malawi can also benefit from global expertise and good practices in this regard. Proven solutions are available in addressing income and nutritional poverty from which we can learn as a nation.

# CFSC BASIC NEEDS BASKET: LILONGWE, BLANTYRE, ZOMBA & MZUZU – AUGUST 2012

## (A) COST OF BASIC FOOD ITEMS FOR A HOUSEHOLD SIZE OF SIX PEOPLE IN

Commodity - Quantity	Lilongwe		Zomba		Blantyre		Mzuzu	
	Kwacha	Total	Kwacha	Total	Kwacha	Total	Kwacha	Total
Maize (50 Kg Bag) - 2 bags	2,814	5,628	3,350	6,700	3,417	6,834	2,450	4,900
Milling (Including Grinding) - 14 Tins	143	2,002	123	1,722	120	1,680	150	2,100
Beans (0.8kg/day) 8 days - 6.4 Kg	351	2,246	347	2,221	329	2,106	470	3,008
Usipa (250g/day) 4 days - 1 Kg	1,590	1,590	1,200	1,200	2,693	2,693	1,450	1,450
Dry Utaka (200g/day) 4 days - 0.8 Kgs	2,110	1,688	1,214	971	2,364	1,891	2,150	1,720
Kapenta (200g/day) 4 days - 0.8 Kgs	2,233	1,786	1,200	960	2,833	2,266	1,067	854
Beef (1 kg/day) 4 days - 4 Kgs	925	3,700	800	3,200	814	3,256	1,000	4,000
Eggs (12/day) 4 days - 48	40	1,920	45	2,160	47	2,256	50	2,400
Rape (750g/day) 30 days - 22.5 Kgs	108	2,430	121	2,723	189	4,253	197	4,433
Tomato (0.5 kg/day) 30 days - 15 Kgs	229	3,435	149	2,235	204	3,060	180	2,700
Onion (116g/day) 30 days - 3.5 Kgs	328	1,148	276	966	227	795	325	1,138
Fresh Milk (250mls/day) 30 days - 15x500 ml pkt	124	1,860	150	2,250	150	2,250	168	2,520
Kazinga Cooking Oil - 3x 1 Litters	1,207	3,621	1,210	3,630	1,207	3,621	1,292	3,876
Bread (5 bkfts/week) 20 days - 20 Loaves	186	3,720	210	4,200	191	3,820	180	3,600
Sugar (2 kgs/week) - 8 Kgs	293	2,344	296	2,368	299	2,392	300	2,400
Kitchen Salt - 1 Kg	105	105	103	103	111	111	183	183
Tea (Chisangalalo) - 40 x 25g	21	840	44	1,760	15	600	31	1,240
Cassava (2kgsx2bkfts/wk) - 16 Kgs	66	1,056	38	608	71	1,136	40	640
<b>Sub-total</b>		<b>41,120</b>		<b>39,977</b>		<b>45,019</b>		<b>43,161</b>
<b>Sub-total (Food Basket)</b>	<b>(B) COST OF ESSENTIAL NON-FOOD ITEMS</b>							
Charcoal (50 Kgs) - 2 Bags	2,857	5,714	2,200	4,400	5,000	10,000	4,000	8,000
Protex - 10 Tablets	250	2,500	263	2,630	250	2,500	281	2,810
Boom - 8 Packets	150	1,200	161	1,288	160	1,280	153	1,224
Clere Body Lotion - 2 x 400 mls	257	514	210	420	256	512	298	596
Vaseline Blue Seal - 2 x 100 mls	215	430	254	508	292	584	243	268
Electricity (Meter) - Average/Month	2,885	2,885	2,823	2,823	3,389	3,389	1,108	1,108
Running Water (Meter) - Average/Month	1,506	1,506	2,331	2,331	2,610	2,610	1,115	1,115
Housing (3 Bed roomed) - Rent/Month	23,417	23,417	12,501	12,501	15,469	15,469	13,516	13,516
<b>Sub-total</b>		<b>38,166</b>		<b>26,901</b>		<b>36,344</b>		<b>28,637</b>
<b>Total for Basic Needs Basket</b>		<b>79,286</b>		<b>66,787</b>		<b>81,363</b>		<b>71,798</b>

City Average from previous months	D. 10	J. 11	F.11.	M.11	A.11	M.11	J. 11	J.11	A.11	S.11	O.11	N.11	D.11	J. 12	F.12	M.12	A. 12	M.12	J.12	J. 12
Amount (MK)	45,530	47,334	48,044	49,112	49,070	49,211	49,506	54,398	53,453	56,032	57,407	61,778	63, 889	70,930	71,332	71,440	69,221	72,506	76,314	74,345

## (C) SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS

	Lilongwe	Zomba	Blantyre	Mzuzu		
Education (per year)					Fuel (cost at the pump)	
Secondary (fees)	8415	7525	6000	7600	Diesel (per litre)	K475
Primary (GPF)	900	950	700	1200	Petrol (per litre)	K490
Uniform/shoes (Primary)	1550	2920	3200	2100	Paraffin (per litre)	K171
Uniform/shoes (Secondary)	2280	5100	4000	4400		
Other (pens, books, etc.)	1044	3900	2600	2700		
Minibus fare to town and back LL: MK400 – MK1000; BT: MK400; ZA: MK200 – MK240; MZ: MK200 – MK350						

The Social Conditions Research Program of the [Centre for Social Concern](http://www.cfscmalawi.org) conducted these surveys on 23<sup>rd</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> August in the cities of Blantyre, Zomba, Lilongwe and Mzuzu.

For more information and feedback, please contact:

Alex Nkosi,

Social Conditions Research Programme Officer

Centre for Social Concern, P.O. Box 40049, Lilongwe, Malawi

Tel: 265-1-715-632 Fax: 260-1-716-136

Cell: +265 211 955 705 / +265 999 789 820 / +265 994 116 163

E-mail: [alex.nkosi@cfscmalawi.org](mailto:alex.nkosi@cfscmalawi.org) or [alexnkosi@yahoo.com](mailto:alexnkosi@yahoo.com)

[jkuppens@cfscmalawi.org](mailto:jkuppens@cfscmalawi.org); [hnb-urban@cfscmalawi.org](mailto:hnb-urban@cfscmalawi.org) or [cfsc@malawi.net](mailto:cfsc@malawi.net)

Location: Next to St. Francis Catholic Parish, Area 25C, Kanengo.

Website: [www.cfscmalawi.org](http://www.cfscmalawi.org)