

**SPEECH BY
HON. GRACE ZINENANI MASEKO, MP,**

**MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**MADE AT THE LAUNCHING OF THE
DECENTRALISED ENVIRONMENTAL
MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES**

ON 26TH JUNE, 2013

AT

SUNBIRD CAPITAL

- **Mr Kester Kaphaizi, Secretary for Local Government and Rural Development;**
- **Mr Ted Sitimawina, Secretary for Economic Planning and Development;**
- **The Secretary for Environment and Climate Change;**
- **The UNDP Representative;**
- **The Director of Economic Planning and Development;**
- **Directors from the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development;**
- **Officials from the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development;**
- **Members of Diplomatic Community;**

- **Mr Richard Hara, the Chief Executive for Lilongwe City Council;**
- **Mr Felix Mkandawire, the District Commissioner for Lilongwe District Council;**
- **Micheal MMangisa -Programme Manager for PEI**
- **Other Development Partners present;**
- **Representatives of Local and International NGO's;**
- **Distinguished invited Guests;**
- **Members of Press;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen.**

It is my great honour and privilege to be here this morning and be part of the launch of one of the invaluable planning instrument in the environment and natural resources sector.

It is also with pleasure that I wish to join the Director of Ceremonies in welcoming you all to this auspicious occasion. Let me register my sincere appreciation to all of you for patronising the launch of the 'Decentralised Environmental Management Guidelines'.

Ladies and Gentlemen, today we shall witness the launch of the Decentralised Environmental Management Guidelines, one of the invaluable instruments which is critical in mainstreaming environment and natural resources issues in the District Development Plans (DDP's)

Allow me **ladies and gentlemen** to highlight that the document that is being launched today was reviewed through a participatory process

involving stakeholders at both district (District Environmental Sub Committees) as well as at national level.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Malawi as a country continues to face alarming degradation of the environment which results into significant loss of soil fertility, soil erosion, serious deforestation, water depletion and degradation, pollution, loss of biodiversity and climate change amongst others.

This has impacted negatively on the vulnerability of communities in rural and urban poor areas whose livelihoods largely depends on natural resources to cater for amongst other needs, energy supply, subsistence farming and income generation. The key challenges confronting Government are how to promote effective Environmental and Natural Resources Management within the context of contemporary policies, legal and institutional reforms.

Ladies and Gentlemen; the Malawi Government has taken various measures to safe guard the country's natural resources base. These include among others, the enactment of the Environmental Management Act (1996), the Land Policy (2002), the Forestry Policy (1996), the Water and Sanitation Policy (2005) and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2006).

Ladies and Gentlemen; these policy and regulatory instruments can effectively be implemented and monitored if we have specific instruments to generate relevant data and information to support informed decision making. To this end, the District Development Planning System (DDPS) plays a pivot role in bridging such gaps.

Ladies and Gentlemen; Managing climate change, Natural Resources and Environment, has emerged as one of the priority areas in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II

(MGDS II). This underscores the prominence Government has given in raising the profile of climate change and Environment issues and mainstreaming them in both national and district level planning and development processes.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as you are aware, in 1998, the Malawi Government adopted the Decentralisation Policy. The Local Government Act was passed by Parliament in the same year to give the policy legal impetus. The aim is to devolve some government functions, responsibilities and resources to Malawians through their Local Governments in order to accord Citizens opportunity to participate in local governance and local development to improve the delivery of basic services, to accelerate socio-economic development and to consolidate the country's young democracy.

Ladies and Gentlemen; in compliance with the decentralisation policy, the District Environmental Action Plans (DEAP's) which

emanates from the State of Environmental Reports have been aligned to the Socio Economic Profiles (SEP's)

Ladies and Gentlemen; the Revised Decentralised Environmental Management Guidelines will therefore be critical in addressing the gaps and inconsistencies from the previous Decentralised Environmental Management Manuals (DEMM). This will help Councils to ensure that emerging and critical environmental issues have been integrated in the District Development Plans (DDP's).

Finally, **and Gentlemen;** I am deeply thankful for the support rendered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) through the Poverty Initiative Project (PEI) which facilitated the production of the this important document.

With these remarks, **Ladies and Gentlemen;** it is now my singular honour, to declare the Decentralised Environmental Management Guidelines officially launched.

I thank you for your attention and may God bless you abundantly.