



**OPENING REMARKS AND OFFICIAL LAUNCH
OF THE UPDATED SCOTLAND-MALAWI
PARTNERSHIP PRACTICAL GUIDE**

BY

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DELIVERED AT THE

**YOUTH AND SCHOOLS FORUM: YOUTH &
SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP GUIDE LAUNCH
ON**

Thursday, 31st MARCH 2022

- Members of the Scotland Malawi Partnership and the Malawi Scotland Partnership
- All Malawi Ministry of Education officials present,
- All other Distinguished Participants,
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

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- Good evening.
 - I would like to start by congratulating the Scotland Malawi Partnership (SMP) and the Malawi Scotland Partnership (MaSP) teams for being proactive and responsive in updating the Youth and Schools Partnership Guide.
 - To all members and partners who contributed to the updated Guide,

including youth and school clubs, teachers, and volunteers, I say well done! You deserve a round of applause!

- Ladies and Gentlemen, this work demonstrates the high level of commitment that the SMP and the MaSP have towards ensuring that nothing stops the youth and schools from serving as the centres for productive cultural exchange, ethical human development, and strengthening of historical ties between our two countries.
- This level of collaboration between the Scotland Malawi Partnership (SMP) network in Scotland, and the Malawi Scotland Partnership network (MaSP) in Malawi is commendable for being both productive and progressive, in that it has seen many of

our youth and schools benefit through exchange events over the past 150 years.

- My great excitement particularly stems from the fact that this partnership has maintained education at its heart over the 15 decades.
- Reading through the updated Guide, I see potential for improved understanding of global concepts, and personal development, that are useful to society. For example, there is likely to be an improved understanding of youth work, which may lead to a youth that is more engaged in education, positive living, co-existence, and active engagement in socio-economy and national development.

- This is important Ladies and Gentlemen, because, as emphasized by one of the great African leaders in the person of Nelson Mandela, **education is a great equalizer.**
- This is perhaps why, Ladies and Gentlemen, we continue to enjoy mutual respect and peer learning that is flourishing in this time-tested partnership between our two lovely nations. Let us harness this in perpetuity!
- Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to also acknowledge the drive for sustained friendship exhibited in the quick move to update the Youth and Schools Partnership Guide to include ways and means of circumventing the challenges brought

about by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change, among other things.

- This includes harnessing digital means of ensuring continued communication to complement physical exchanges that will remain important to the strengthening of our cherished partnership and deepening our understanding of each other for improved friendship.
- In addition, I am also pleased that this updated Guide harnesses innovative thinking to exploit greener approaches to collaboration, amidst climate change, and provides practical support on how to digitally connect schools. Such strategies will go a long way to keep our two nations meaningfully engaged as we both pursue

other more scalable and environmentally sustainable ways of business and life.

- This day, Ladies and Gentlemen, also brings to me precious memories of Edinburgh, Scotland, where I participated in bilateral relationships and actively engaged in both the MaSP and SMP, while working and living there with my family.
- One reminiscent key attribute that is unforgettable, is the values-driven nature of this network, and how this is celebrated while supporting and developing civic partnerships underpinned by mutual respect, human solidarity, and dignity. This is why, Ladies and Gentlemen, reading through this updated Guide one sees clearly that Scotland despite being a

donor, views Malawi as a dear friend and equal partner.

- It is heartening, Ladies and Gentlemen, to note that this updated Partnership Guide is informed by experiences from the visits to some Malawian schools and sampled districts across the country, and lessons from cultural discourse.
- Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to convey my gratitude to the SMP and MaSP for presenting the Youth Groups and Schools Forum with an updated Guide that has a strong focus on continued learning, critical thinking, empathy, inclusivity, and mutual understanding. This is what our youth and learners desperately need for proper development into ethical individuals

that are a prerequisite for positive development built on a solid foundation of shared core human values. With this, our two countries can be assured of a future - a bright future - of continued co-existence and prosperous peace.

- I am happy that this Youth Groups and Schools Partnership fortifies our contemporary linkages built on a rich past of civic cooperation between churches, education institutions, hospitals, and communities.
- Ladies and Gentlemen, with the continued financial and in-kind support from the MaSP, SMP and the Scottish Government, the existing civic-led educational

partnerships (well over 200) are likely to grow and impact more of our people.

- These education partnerships, Ladies and Gentlemen, are very important for Malawi, especially at this time when Malawi is making deliberate efforts to build its human capital that is needed to propel the country to its **Malawi 2063** vision of an inclusively wealthy and self-reliant upper middle income country status.
- Ladies and Gentlemen, as you may be aware, the Government of Malawi has a new long-term national development strategy called **Malawi 2063** and we have now also developed the first 10-Year Implementation Plan (MIP 1, 2021-30).

- It is worth noting that we have aligned our 10-year National Education Sector Investment Plan (2020-2030) with the MIP 1.
- Ladies and Gentlemen, it is also noteworthy that both our education sector plans and national development strategies offer pathways for meaningful participation of the youth who constitute the majority of the population.
- These strategic documents present several key intervention areas of focus, nine of which I highlight below, as they directly relate to the goals and scope of the SMP and MaSP. Ladies and Gentlemen, let me now highlight the nine intervention areas:
 1. In a bid to harness the demographic dividend my Ministry will endeavor to

give every child at least 12 years of schooling. This means that every child must at least complete both primary and secondary education.

2. To achieve that, the Government of Malawi will now implement compulsory basic education. We will also be legislating compulsory secondary education.
3. Furthermore, we continue to expand learning spaces for our children, by constructing more school infrastructure and expanding digitalization of education.
4. To that effect, my Ministry is developing a strategy for the expansion of open secondary schooling, digitalizing the

entire secondary curriculum, and promoting expansion of e-Learning in tertiary education. Soon, the country will see the establishment of a Ministry-owned Education Broadcasting Station. These efforts will ensure continuity of learning even during disasters such as the recent Tropical Storm Ana and the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. My Ministry is also working to promote universal access to digital skills by expanding ICT/computer studies to all schools and including an ICT module in our growing Continuous Professional Development (CPD) program for teachers.

6. Ladies and Gentlemen, digitalization of education also includes exploration of the use of virtual and augmented reality technology for science teaching and learning and promoting education technology hubs around the country. This is one of the areas that the SMP and MaSP could support by facilitating collaboration between education and industry players in Scotland and Malawi.
7. Furthermore, in response to the dynamism of the youth and the need to equip them better for current and future jobs (**MW 2063**), including self-employment, my Ministry has embarked on re-engineering of the

curriculum. In this regard, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am delighted that this Scotland-Malawi Youth and Schools Partnership can be embedded in, and support the curriculum and learning activities, and thus help reframe and re-ignite learning. In addition, it is also meant to inspire urgency for positive change and develop skills in enquiry and critical thinking on global issues. The Partnership promotes education for global citizenship, with direct benefits for learners, teachers, and schools. All this is in line with our drive for a transformed Malawi school curriculum.

8. My Ministry is convinced with the significant contribution that school

feeding has on school attendance and performance and is inviting all partners to support our drive to expand it to all schools in Malawi.

9. A final key intervention I want to highlight is the provision of relevant teaching and learning materials to learners with special education needs to ensure a meaningful learning experience.

- Ladies and Gentlemen, I have singled out the interventions just to highlight some of the potential areas of focus for the SMP-MaSP member groups.
- You will notice, Ladies and Gentlemen, that the Government of Malawi, continues to

show its commitment to these and more strategic interventions, including increased budgetary allocation. For example, we have for the first-time distributed science books which will see each secondary school learner have their own Mathematics, Biology, Physics and Chemistry textbook, for the first time in the recent history of Malawi. As we strive to improve the quality of teaching and learning in our schools, shortage of teaching and learning materials remains a major hurdle. I believe that support in this area would go a long way to complement life-changing experiences among the young people in and out of school in Malawi.

- It is my hope to see more schools, many more cohorts of new generations of Malawians and Scots building productive and transformative friendships at community and national levels, inspired by this MaSP and SMP network and the Youths and Schools Forum, using adaptive instruments such as this updated Guide.
- With these not-so-few remarks, I happily open this Scotland-Malawi Partnership Youth Groups and Schools Forum, and officially launch the Youth and Schools Partnership Guide.

God bless Scotland, God bless Malawi!