



## Members' meeting with Malawi High Commissioner

Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2015

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On the 29<sup>th</sup> July 2015 members of the Scotland Malawi Partnership met with the new Malawi High Commissioner to the UK, Mr Kena Mphonda. The aims of the meeting were to:

- Introduce SMP members to the new Malawi High Commissioner
- Hear more about the Government of Malawi and High Commission's priority areas
- Increase mutual awareness of our respective work
- Support two-way communication channels for effective joint working

The meeting's discussion focussed on a range of topics, including:

- Trade, Investment and Tourism
- Entrepreneurism
- Data collection
- Visas
- Benchmarking
- Food Security

The SMP continues to work closely with the Malawi High Commission to continue this dialogue.

### ATTENDEES:

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Peter West	Honorary Consul	<a href="mailto:p.west@strath.ac.uk">p.west@strath.ac.uk</a>

## WELCOMING REMARKS AND ROUNDTABLE INTRODUCTIONS

Charlie Bevan from the Scotland Malawi Partnership offered a warm welcome to Mr Mphonda, and invited all the attendees to briefly introduce themselves.

## INTRODUCING H.E. MR KENA MPHONDA

Dr Peter West, Scotland's Honorary Consul to Malawi offered a brief introduction of Mr Mphonda.

Mr Mphonda is no stranger to Scotland as he was part of the delegation with then President Joyce Banda in 2013 as part of the David Livingstone bicentenary. He is a greatly experienced diplomat and has been an active part of the Minister of Foreign Affairs for a number of years. His recent positions have included:

- 2012-15: Chief of Protocol, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lilongwe
- 2010-12: Director of Political Affairs, Lilongwe – this included management of Malawi's key bilateral and multilateral relations
- 2006-10: Deputy Ambassador to the USA, Washington
- 2003-6: Assistant Director of International Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lilongwe

## THE SCOTLAND MALAWI PARTNERSHIP: PRIORITIES AND PRINCIPLES

The Scotland Malawi Partnership provided a brief overview of the work of the network, focusing in particular on how member forums contribute to the priorities of the Government of Malawi's Growth and Development Strategy 2.

Click [here](#) to download the slides.

## PRIORITIES FOR THE MALAWI HIGH COMMISSION

Mr Mphonda outlined briefly the key priorities for him and the Malawi High Commission in the coming months. These included:

- Period of orientation for him, giving time to understanding the landscape in the UK
- Strengthening political relationships in the UK
- Investment, trade and tourism opportunities, looking forward to planning an investment forum in December, potentially attended by six Heads of State

Mr Mphonda was keen to stress he wants to approach the above priorities, and all the work of the High Commission, with a result-oriented perspective. He is spending the next few weeks finalising the work plan of the Commission for the coming year, which will outline the key benchmarks for success.

## Q AND A

### **Trade, Investment and Tourism**

The MHC is still discussing work plans for how best to strengthen their trade and investment work.

#### **Trade:**

The MHC is keen to focus promotion activities on a few key Malawian products and is in the process of exploring the different options.

#### **Investment:**

The MHC is focusing particularly on marketing and branding opportunities, as well as how they use contacts in the media and with Honorary Consuls to promote investment opportunities in Malawi. The MHC explained the restructuring of MITC as a one-stop shop for investment support is a significant step towards making Malawi a favourable place for doing business. The Government is committed to assuring investors that their investments will be secure.

#### **Tourism:**

A specific question was raised in relation to the proposed development of a tourism resort at Cape Maclear. The MHC explained this project had been in the pipeline for a number of years, but it would be key to develop other infrastructure around any resort to guarantee its success, for example the development of the airport at Mangochi. At the recent investment forum in Malawi there was some interest in the project from Chinese investors.

Relating to the comment on infrastructure, a question was raised on wide-scale irrigation and the role water will play in many of these large scale investments.

The MHC offered to share the recent Investment Compendium from the Government of Malawi that outlined some of the infrastructure projects currently looking for investment. [Click here](#) to download the document.

## **Entrepreneurism**

The MHC explained the development of entrepreneurial skills is a key priority for the Government of Malawi. In particular, investment in technical colleges to develop skills is a key priority on the agenda. The MHC offered to circulate the latest outline of this work which was presented in Malawi in May 2015. Click [here](#) to download it.

## **Data**

A question was raised on the reliability of electronic data due to collection variability, as well as some difficulties around storing and sharing the data. This was an issue for a few members working with their partners in Malawi gathering and sharing data on their projects. The MHC said the Commission had not done much work in this area before but would be something they would review in their work plans.

## **Visas**

The MHC outlined the plans for the Government of Malawi to introduce a visa fee on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015. The Commission is currently looking at the potential for UK citizens to be able to pay in advance for their visa through the MHC's website or through the post. The Government is also currently reviewing what currency it can be paid in, but at the moment the plan is for it to be paid in US dollars.

Questions were raised by some members as to whether this would be a disincentive for investors, but the MHC said this would not be a disincentive and that Government had weighed advantages and disadvantages and agreed this to be their policy.

## **Dual nationality**

Members of the Malawian Diaspora shared with the attendees that they had had a productive discussion with the MHC in their previous lunch meeting on the issue of dual nationality.

The diaspora representatives also reminded the group that they are there to support Scotland-Malawi links, and have the expertise and insight to valuably contribute to strengthening the partnerships.

## **Benchmarks**

A question was asked on what success would look like for the MHC. The MHC offered to report back once the work plans and associated benchmarks had been agreed, and will use this to measure success over the coming months.

## **Food security**

The MHC explained that the food security in Malawi was adversely affected by floods and a dry spell such that Government will procure additional food to provide for shortfalls.

## **CLOSING REMARKS**

Next steps:

- Once MHC confirmed its work plan, to share the headlines with the SMP
- MHC to send on key documents referenced in the discussion
- SMP to send formal invitation to SMP AGM on 3<sup>rd</sup> October, and keep MHC in the loop regarding 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations
- SMP and MHC to sustain dialogue and continue to work closely together