

**SPEECH DELIVERED Mrs. ERICA MAGANGA SECRETARY FOR
AGRICULTURE AT THE POLICY RESEARCH SEMINAR ON THE
FUTURE OF SMALLHOLDER FARMING IN MALAWI**

Date: Thursday, 11th February 2021

Venue: Virtual

- **SALUTATIONS**
- **Hon. Lobin C. Lowe, PM Minister of Agriculture.**
- **MwAPATA Advisory Board Chairperson, Prof Richard Mkandawire,**
- **NASFAM - Chief Executive, Dr Betty Chinyamunyamu and your team.**
- **MwAPATA Acting Executive Director, Mr William Chadza and your team.**
- **Officials from Government and other institutions**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

Good morning,

My simple task this morning is to request the Guest of Honour for this function, the Honorable Minister of Agriculture to make official opening remarks on this occasion, however, before I do so allow me to say a few words.

I wish to first welcome you, Honourable Minister and thank you most sincerely for creating time to be part of and preside over this very crucial event despite your busy schedule. I know Sir, you were at liberty to delegate but because of your keen interest and passion for the sector and the subject under discussion today, you had to squeeze your timetable to personally participate. I recall when, you were informed about this event and invited to preside over it, you didn't hesitate at all.

Let me in the same vein, also appreciate and welcome all the distinguished participants to this event.

Honourable Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is barely five months when we came together to witness the launch of MwAPATA Institute, signaling the birth of another local policy research think tank. Let me thank MwAPATA for bringing us here in fulfilment of one of their key objectives relating to

policy research where it seeks to generate cutting edge empirical research to inform policy debates and policy making processes in the sector.

Honourable Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen; the Ministry is very keen to drive the agriculture sector agenda on the basis of solid policy foundations informed by research. In this age no one is interested in making decisions or policies which are devoid of careful analysis or indeed consideration of evidence. That is why we have identified improved policy making as a crosscutting priority of the NAIP so that we can realize our aspirations in the other programs namely: Resilient Livelihood and Agricultural Systems; Production and Productivity; and, Markets, Value addition, Trade and Finance.

Honourable Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen, the topic under discussion today is very central to the agriculture sector in Malawi. I also know that it is at the core of your heart Honourable Minister, as you explore options for modernizing the extension workers to provide the much-needed support to smallholder farmers. Our National Agriculture Policy (NAP), has placed emphasis on farmer-led agricultural transformation and commercialization that entails looking at farming as a

business. In this case we are talking about the majority of the smallholder farmers doing agriculture businesses.

Honourable Minister, I don't intend to pre-empt your remarks, let me at this moment invite you, Sir, to address us and officially open this policy seminar.

Hourable Minister Sir,