



**CLOSING REMARKS BY  
THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE  
MRS. ERICA MAGANGA**

**MADE AT THE CLOSURE OF THE 2021 MALAWI ANNUAL  
AGRICULTURAL POLICY CONFERENCE**

**LILONGWE**

**ON**

**2<sup>ND</sup> JUNE, 2021**

- The Principal Secretary, Ministry of Forestry and Natural Resources- Dr. Yanira Ntupayama
- Prof Richard Mkandawire, Chairperson for MwAPATA Institute Board of Directors and National Planning Commission
- Dr Thomas Munthali, Director General, National Planning Commission
- Dr Candida Nakhumwa, Country Director, Foundation for a Smoke Free World and Agricultural Transformation Initiative
- Mr Chancellor Kaferapanjira, Chief Executive Officer, MCCCCI
- The Executive Director for MwAPATA Institute
- Directors here present
- All Presenters
- All discussants
- The media
- Distinguished guests
- Ladies and gentlemen

I have the honor this afternoon to make the closing remarks as we have come to the end of the 2021 Malawi Annual Agricultural Policy Conference. This marks the culmination of 2

days of intensive policy discussions and deliberations aimed at putting Malawi on the right agricultural transformation trajectory.

**Ladies and gentlemen**, this policy conference has put on the spot key issues that need to be closely looked at and addressed within the sector. Let me begin by referring to what captivated me in the keynote address by Professor Mangani. The address laid bare several action points which as a country we need to take. These included:

- The need to exploit opportunities for increasing yields and total factor productivity
- The need to make full use of water resources for irrigation
- The need to exploit opportunities for developing new value chains

- The need to formulate & implement a strategy to graduate from tobacco, and
- The need for government to increase expenditures on Agricultural Research and Development, extension services, rural infrastructure & other public goods to support new value chains

It was also emphasized, **ladies and gentlemen**, that to achieve this, there is a need for a combination of leadership and a Coalition of the Willing that should be supported by evidence-based policy analysis. As Government, we highly commend MwAPATA Institute for coming in to fill this gap.

**Ladies and gentlemen**, this conference has also holistically tackled key themes that are very prominent for the growth and development of

the sector. Through the discussions over the 2 days, we have discussed policy challenges and options in the areas of agricultural productivity, commercialization, diversification, land policy, and resilience. These are all issues that are at the heart of the Ministry and are given due emphasis in both the National Agricultural Policy (NAP) and the National Agriculture Investment Plan (NAIP).

Ladies and gentlemen, interesting discussions have emerged under each of these themes. From the discussions, it is very clear that the absence of policy conferences like this has over the years starved the sector of platforms where stakeholders come together to engage in meaningful and constructive policy discussions.

Ladies and gentlemen, I also want to applaud this conference for the diversity of stakeholders who participated. This diversity greatly enriched the discussions. We had representation from the National Assembly, civil society, the private sector, academia, government, and traditional leaders. This enabled analysis of policy issues and discussions to be viewed from all necessary perspectives.

Ladies and gentlemen, before I conclude I also want to echo what continually is said by different quarters that "Malawi has good policies but the challenges lie in the implementation". There is a tendency to always attribute failure in policy implementation to a lack of political will. However, the Vice President, Right Honorable Dr. Saulos Klaus

Chilima, challenged all of us yesterday that we are all politicians in our own right in the different areas where we work. Ladies and gentlemen, in a nutshell, what the Vice President was communicating is that it is the responsibility of all of us to ensure that the country bridges the policy-to-implementation gaps that prevail. Each of us has a role to play in this regard and it is through conferences like this that we can enhance the contribution of different voices to ensuring that policies are effectively implemented.

Lastly, **Ladies and Gentlemen**, let me extend special appreciation to MwAPATA Institute and all the organizing partners for successfully putting up and holding this conference. I also want to thank each one of you for being very active and engaging participants. As a Ministry,

it is our sincere hope that this conference will not be an isolated one, but that MwAPATA Institute and partners will continue to organize these conferences as they provide a great platform for policy engagement.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,** with these remarks, I would like to declare the 2021 Malawi Annual Agricultural Policy Conference officially closed.