



GOVERNMENT OF MALAWI

TALKING NOTES FOR

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MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

AT THE

**NATIONAL CONSULTATIVE
WORKSHOP**

FOR THE

**FERTILISER AND SOIL HEALTH
POLICIES AND INTERVENTIONS IN
MALAWI**

6TH DECEMBER 2022

UFULU GARDERNS

Salutations

- Director of Planning – Ministry of Agriculture
- All Directors in the Ministry and Government agencies
- The Executive Director – MWAPATA Institute
- The Executive Director – NASFAM
- Head of Program and Policy – CISANET
- Representative of the Alliance for African Partnership
- Representatives from the Development Partners

- Representatives from the Academia
- Representatives from the Private Sector
- Representatives from the Farmer organisations
- Government officials
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

When we talk about agriculture, we are mostly talking about land and soil farming, especially here in Malawi. It is this type of agriculture that ensures food security, economic growth, and national development for our country and

not the emerging aquaponics farming, among others. I am, therefore, pleased to join this discussion, which is at the centre of agricultural development.

Ladies and Gentlemen, although land and soil conditions are important, often this productive resource is considered an afterthought in most production decisions. Despite this, as a country, I am proud to say that we have made significant progress in improving access to fertiliser that improves soil conditions and crop production.

However, with the recent global challenges related to limited exports of fertiliser and increasing prices, Malawi once again finds herself in a difficult food security situation.

We are all aware that fertiliser prices have doubled. Again, the government is allocating substantial resources to ensure fertiliser is available in the country to secure national food self-sufficiency and household food security.

This situation is not only taking a huge toll on the government's ability to secure the country's food supplies, end hunger and transform the agricultural sector, but also threatening the country's very existence, our agricultural land.

While the factors contributing to the current crisis have been well documented, long-lasting solutions are still scanty and we cannot continue on this trajectory.

Ladies and Gentlemen, one key challenge that data is showing us is that poor soil health is one of the major contributors to the dwindling “*crop response rates to fertilizer*”, and hence agricultural productivity. Thus, the call for action is now.

If our soils are to continue giving us bumper yields, how best can we restore our land then?

The government has been implementing several land and soil conservation interventions to replenish the country’s soils and

conserve land resources. However, land degradation and soil fertility remain a challenge in the country. Therefore, it is expected of this forum to come up with practical solutions that will help the government to develop long-term responses.

Ladies and Gentlemen, away from the national level discussion, I am aware that next year in June, Malawi will participate in the African Fertiliser and Soil Health (AFSH) Summit organised by the African Union. This is a follow-up to

the Abuja Summit in 2006, where member countries made resolutions to improve access to fertiliser and improve soil health.

For the next summit, countries are expected to report on 2006 resolutions. Thus, this workshop is timely as we are required to take stock of the frameworks and interventions that we have been implementing to achieve the Abuja 2006 resolutions. This is why we have been given this space as stakeholders in the fertilizer, soil health, and ecology sectors.

As a Ministry, we join you, so that together we can jointly undertake an honest assessment of our situation, propose solutions to our challenges and reach a consensus on the position of our fertiliser and soil health situation.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we can all agree that we have one country, and no solution to our challenges will come from outside our borders. Again, we can also agree that as we head to the AFSH Summit in 2023, we need to have a country position.

Therefore, the time for speaking as individual stakeholders is no longer acceptable in this sector, if we are to advance the agricultural development agenda. So, the contributions of each stakeholder in this workshop will be invaluable in shaping future interventions. You should feel proud for being part of this discussion.

As a Ministry, we will be keenly looking forward to the output of this workshop because it will be vital for informing the national interventions and compiling the

national report ahead of the 2023 June Summit. Together we have the power to influence change.

Before I conclude, let me thank all stakeholders who have taken part to organise this workshop. Specifically, let me recognise officials from the Ministry, MWAPATA Institute, CISANET, Alliance for African Partnership and LUANAR for successfully organising this meeting. Let us continue this collaboration across the sector.

In conclusion, I wish you all fruitful deliberations and officially declare this workshop open.

Thank you and God bless the Nation