



6TH EMINENT SPEAKER'S SERIES

Theme:

“Importance of Human and Institutional Capacity Enhancement in Building Resilient Agri-Food Systems in Africa”

Official Opening Remarks by Principal Secretary - Agriculture

Salutations:

- The Advisory Board Chair for MwAPATA Institute and Chairperson for the National Planning Commission, Prof Richard Mkandawire
- The Director General of the National Planning Commission; Dr. Thomas Munthali,
- The Executive Director of MwAPATA Institute; Mr. William Chadza,
- The Vice Chancellor of the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Prof. Lewis Dzimbiri,
- The Country Director of the Agricultural Transformation Initiative
- The Guest Speaker; Professor Kelvin Urama and our Panelists.
- Distinguished participants,
- The media
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good evening!

- It gives me pleasure, today to be among you in this 6th Eminent Speaker's Series, held under the partnership of MwAPATA Institute, the National Planning Commission (NPC), and Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR).
- This event is held within the ambit of 'Ndizotheka Initiatives', a collaborative programme aimed at leveraging knowledge and sharing experiences on initiatives that transform lives and influence mind-set change, within the broader development vision of 'inclusive wealth creation and self-reliance'.
- As we have experienced, Eminent Speaker's series continue to provide relevant input in Malawi's development policies through expert views shared during these events. The policy perspectives that have been produced from these series have continued to shape the way we design and implement development programs in different sectors. I applaud the partnership for coming up with this initiative that is providing government with knowledge and insights

for effective policy and programs direction in developing our country.

- Today we gather here for the 6th series of the program under the theme:

“Importance of Human and Institutional Capacity Enhancement in Building Resilient Agri-Food Systems in Africa”

- As some of you may be aware, the UN Secretary General will be convening a Food Systems Summit in September this year. This summit will be a coronation of events lined up to mark the decade of action for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. The summit aims to lay strategic actions for a transformed global agri-food system to actualize the 2030 Agenda for the SDGs. It is expected to identify the levers and pathways for reshaping the global and national food systems that will accelerate the progress towards the attainment of the SDGs.

- The Summit has adopted a model of participatory consultations dubbed “Food Systems Summit Dialogues (FSSDs)” for generating game changing ideas from global, national (and sub-national) and independent dialogue sessions. The National Food Systems Dialogues are a critical element of the Summit preparatory process as they encourage analyses, explorations and solutions that are context specific.
- In response to the global (UN) Food Systems Summit process, Malawi has commenced the process by constituting a high-level multi-stakeholder taskforce that is organizing the national (and sub-national) stakeholders’ dialogue.
- It is pleasing to note that this 6th ESS event will discuss human and institutional capacity as they relate to building resilient agri-food systems at national and continental level. This is consistent with the context of the Food Systems Summit Dialogues.

- I would like to thank the coordination of MwAPATA Institute, NPC and LUANAR for organizing this important event which will directly inform the national food systems dialogue.
- The Ministry of Agriculture is committed to making sure that the outcomes from this this Eminent Speaker Series informs the Malawi position to the 2021 UN Food System Summit.
- Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, I implore all of us gathered here today that we find lasting human and institutional solutions that will build resilient agri-food systems for the benefit of all Malawians. Therefore, I invite you to engage seriously in today's discussion, brainstorming and deliberating in a constructive manner so that all our efforts may be fruitful.
- Before I take my seat, I would like to sincerely thank the Guest Speaker tonight, Prof. Kevin Urama from the African Development Institute of the African Development Bank for agreeing to share his experiences and propose solutions to some of the key and pertinent

issues that he is going to share as we engage in this important conversation.

- To the Discussant, Prof. Richard Mkandawire and all the panelists tonight, Prof. Address Malata, Dr. Agnes Mwangwela and Dr. Rodwell Mzonde, please I encourage you to share with us from your experiences so that we may get solutions and proposals to input in the upcoming food systems summit.
- Our few physical participants in this room, our online participants, please feel free to bring up issues for deliberation with regards to this topic.
- With these few remarks, it is now my singular honor and humble duty to declare the 6th Ndizotheka Eminent Speaker Series officially opened.