



REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

STATEMENT

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY

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PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

**AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF
THE 2022 MALAWI AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY
AND COMMERCIALIZATION CONFERENCE**

LILONGWE, MALAWI

THURSDAY, 9TH JUNE 2022

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My purpose in coming today is to issue an urgent call to action regarding agricultural productivity and commercialization. As much as I respect conferences and talking shops that create a synergy of ideas and policies in the agricultural sector, I am afraid the time for talking is past. This is a moment for action, because we already know what our situation as a nation with an agro-based economy demands.

It's been thirty eight months since I launched a manifesto that included the promise to create mega farms to boost agricultural productivity and commercialization. It's been eighteen months since I launched the Malawi 2063 Vision, which makes it clear that the Malawi we want by 2063 is an inclusively wealthy, self-reliant, and middle-income industrialized nation, built on the foundation of agricultural production, industrialization, mechanization, and commercialization. It's been eighteen months since we ratified the African Continental Free Trade Area and opened up markets all over Africa for our agricultural

products, and in that time, my Administration has negotiated several bilateral trade agreements on the Continent to put that Trade Area to full use. It's been thirteen months since I delivered a State of the Nation Address outlining a developmental agenda for the next three years that focuses on achieving job creation, wealth creation, and food security, largely by revolutionizing our approach agricultural productivity.

Furthermore, it's been nine months since I launched the 1st Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Malawi 2063, an implementation plan that prioritizes increasing Malawi's agricultural productivity and commercialization, which coincided with the launch of Delivery Labs by my Presidential Delivery Unit established to remove any administrative and bureaucratic bottlenecks standing in the way of the implementation of relevant projects in this regards. And it has been five months since the start of the war in Eastern Europe, disrupting the production of commercial foods around the crops and increasing the urgency for us as a nation to turn our pronouncements

and policies for the production of commercial crops on a mass scale into action.

As you can see, what we lack is not policy direction or investment opportunities or public pronouncements regarding agricultural productivity and commercialization through mega farms. What we lack is implementation of these policies and pronouncements by the Ministry of Agriculture. After two years of my Administration, the ministry has yet to produce a single mega farm anywhere in the country, and this is a failure I no longer have the patience to abide. For this reason, I am giving the Ministry of Agriculture six months to produce results that the eyes of Malawians can see. We cannot go into 2023 with this business-as-usual approach. Not on my watch.

The time for action on mega farms is not next year. It is now. The time for ending our reliance on subsistence farming is not next year. It is now. The time for producing commercial crops on a massive scale and

boosting our forex earnings is not next year. It is now. What I expect after this conference is not another conference for people to hear themselves talk, but action and results. What I expect after this conference is that the coming rainy season will be the start of a new era of farming in Malawi. What I expect is that my next crop inspection tour will include the inspection of one or more mega farms in the making.

I am fully vested in this agenda for transforming the agricultural sector towards commercialization. That is why next week, I am launching the Private Sector Labs through my Presidential Delivery Unit, which will bring together private sector players to tell us about the roadblocks they face in their quest to invest in this country. As such, I expect the Minister of Agriculture and his team to be there, not to defend themselves or talk like they don't need new ideas, but to listen to those who want to invest in mega farms in this country, and to understand what needs to be done as a matter of urgency to unlock and unleash Malawi's potential to feed the world. With true and willing partners like the World

Bank standing at the ready to give us a hand up so that we can truly stand on our own two feet as a producing nation, there is no longer any excuse for delays in the implementation of this policy. With large swathes of untapped fertile land, fresh water lakes and river that are the envy of the world, and a citizenry that lives and breathes agriculture, there is no longer any excuse for piece meal approaches to farming. When I hear that China, India, the United States, and Brazil are the world's top producers of crops, it infuriates me, because I see no reason why Malawi cannot one day be on that list. We have everything it takes to compete with the largest crop producers in the world. It must be done. It must be done here. It must be done right. It must be done now. It's our destiny and we must seize it.

With these few remarks, I declare this Agricultural Productivity and Commercialization Conference officially open, and I thank you for your attention.