

## Government of Malawi Ministry of Gender and NGO Board Roundtable

### AGENDA

7th August 2018

**Mandela Room, Edinburgh City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1YJ**

**10am – 12pm, Ministry of Gender and NGO Board Roundtable**

10.00 Teas, coffees and networking

10.15 Welcoming remarks and roundtable introductions

*Kathy Wright, SMP*

10.30 Priorities for the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare

*Dr Esmie T. Kainja, P.S. for Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare*

10.45 Discussion and Q&A with Dr Esmie Kainja on priorities, sharing of projects

*Chaired by Kathy Wright, SMP*

11.10 Priorities for the Malawi NGO Board

*Mr Voice Mhone, Chief Executive of the NGO Board*

11.25 Q&A with Mr Voice Mhone

*Chaired by Kathy Wright, SMP*

11.40 Closing remarks

*Kathy Wright, SMP*

11.45 Teas, coffees and networking

12.00 Meeting closes

**ATTENDEE LIST**

<b>Dr Esmie T Kainja</b>	<b>Ministry of Gender, Children Disability and Social Welfare</b>
<b>Mr Voice Mhone</b>	<b>Malawi NGO Board</b>
<b>Mr Laurent Kansinjiro</b>	
<b>Mr Gilbert Kaponda</b>	
<b>Keryn Banks</b>	<b>Christian Aid</b>
<b>Fidelma Beagan</b>	<b>First Aid Africa</b>
<b>Gemma Burnside</b>	<b>SMP</b>
<b>Rachel Cameron</b>	<b>TCSOA</b>
<b>Jennie Chinemberi</b>	<b>Church of Scotland</b>
<b>Nicola Cogan</b>	<b>Scottish Government</b>
<b>Sarah Conway</b>	<b>Scotland's International Development Alliance</b>
<b>Moira Dunworth</b>	<b>Mamie Martin Fund</b>
<b>Charles Fawcett</b>	<b>Aiming Higher in Malawi</b>
<b>Jackie Farr</b>	<b>SMP</b>
<b>Charles Gay</b>	<b>Christian Aid</b>
<b>Brian Kerr</b>	<b>The Soko Fund</b>
<b>Alan Laverock</b>	<b>The Bananabox Trust</b>
<b>Graeme Little</b>	<b>Mary's Meals</b>
<b>Gordon Macdonald</b>	<b>CARE</b>
<b>Rachel Mackie</b>	<b>Link Community Development</b>
<b>Dylan Mailer</b>	<b>TCSOA</b>
<b>Lorna McDonald</b>	<b>Tearfund</b>
<b>Jane McLaughlin</b>	<b>Aiming Higher in Malawi</b>
<b>Grace O'Donovan</b>	<b>SMP</b>
<b>Peppy Sparrow</b>	<b>Oxfam</b>
<b>Kate Studd</b>	<b>Water Witness International</b>
<b>Kate Sykes</b>	<b>Link Community Development</b>
<b>Kathy Wright</b>	<b>SMP</b>

## MINUTES

### 1. Welcome, Kathy Wright

Kathy Wright thanked guests for attending and gave apologies on behalf of David Hope-Jones for not being able to attend as he was in Malawi. Kathy welcomed the visitors from the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare and introduced the Malawian panel. She noted that we would be hearing on the Ministry's priorities, followed by a Q&A and sharing about some of the work our members are doing in this area. We would also be hearing from the NGO Board and their priorities on charity regulation, followed by a Q&A. Kathy invited guests to stay for networking over tea and Malawian coffee afterwards.

### 2. Priorities for the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare, Laurent Kansinjiro on behalf of Dr Esmie Kainja

Laurent thanked everyone for attending and for welcoming the delegation to Scotland. Laurent explained that the NGO Board is under the Ministry of Gender, and so the priorities of the Ministry would help to ground the NGO Board's priorities. The Ministry of Gender is predominantly a social affairs Ministry. There is a Gender Department which looks at women and economic empowerment, issues of gender-based violence, and women in politics or in the public sphere. There is also a function that supports gender mainstreaming across the sectors, such as in local governance. There is a generic Social Affairs Department which looks at matters of the family and child welfare, foster care, adoption and general childcare, child protection, and the rehabilitation of children who are victims of child abuse or child rights violations. In those case, the Ministry works with an implementation unit that is cross-cutting with gender-based violence, the police and other units. Within the Social Affairs Department, there is also a social protection function which services the provision of direct welfare for households suffering from poverty and marginalisation. There is a Social Transfer Programme which supports approximately 1.5 million individuals. Other Departments include the Planning Department, which anchors the other Departments. There used to be a Department for Community Development but this is no longer part of the Ministry of Gender. The NGO Board falls under the Ministry of Gender mandate because they encompass all social affairs issues, so regardless of sector, the NGO Board is accountable to the Ministry of Gender despite being a semi-autonomous unit. Laurent then listed the Ministry's priorities:

- a. **Gender-based violence** has increased, so that is now a priority along with combating the violation of women's rights. 50% of women who are married in Malawi get married under the age of 18, which means they are child marriages. While the numbers have decreased to 46%, it is still a major priority.
- b. **Women's participation:** in 2014, there was an increase in women who joined Parliament from 22% to 32%. There is a need to strengthen the political empowerment of women, and there is a campaign called the '50/50 Campaign' which looks specifically at political representation.

- c. **Economic empowerment:** the Ministry is looking at an economic empowerment fund for income generation activities in order to support small businesses to grow and to be run by women.
  - d. **Social affairs:** the Ministry is managing childcare centres, and holistic forms of care.
  - e. **Children on the streets** is a growing concern, and the Ministry is exploring ways to address this through the rehabilitation of children. The Malawian Government has provided some money to start this process but fortunately, most partners support these efforts as these children come from most areas in which the partners work.
  - f. **Strengthening case management** in order for children to access child implementation services and education.
  - g. **Social protection**
3. Discussion and Q&A with Dr Esmie Kainja on priorities, sharing of projects, *Dr Esmie Kainja*

Dr Kainja thanked everyone for the invitation to attend this meeting and brought greetings from the President of Malawi and the Minister of Gender. Dr Kainja explained that poverty is high, and the Ministry deals with vulnerable groups, women, girls, the disabled and the chronically ill. Although there is a Ministry of Health, they look to the Ministry of Gender as the 'mother Ministry'.

Dr Kainja explained that the Ministry aims to be self-reliant despite the poverty levels being grave. The Ministry creates the legal environment and the policies for partners. With the financial year ending in June, the Ministry makes sure that the budget is maintained. They work within the [Malawi Growth and Development Strategy III](#) and have aligned their priorities with those of the African Union and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The purpose of this meeting was to highlight the priorities of the Ministry, especially following the delegation's previous meetings in Dublin and London, where Dr Kainja explained that they identified an information gap regarding the benefits of the civil society organisations who work in Malawi. The goal is information-sharing, to develop new partnerships, and improve NGO coordination.

Dr Kainja noted that the Ministry of Gender serves to promote gender equality and gender empowerment. She explained that there are issues where there is parity, and issues where there is a need to target those who are more vulnerable, ie. women. Within the issues of gender-based violence, Malawi has the highest number of girls who get married before the age of 18, some as young as 12 which is child marriage and abuse. The Chiefs are working hard to assist in lobbying and taking children back to school, but the gap is where they need financial support for themselves and the girls. There is also gender-based violence in Government, whether it be physical, emotional or sexual. The Ministry is setting up an economic empowerment fund and are seeking partners to financially support this fund. It was deal with issues of child marriage, provide grants for women and households to engage in businesses, and increase the participation of women in decision-making and politics by enabling women to speak out and to finance their campaigns. Financial support covers costs of transports, air-time, and training. The fund will be managed by the Secretary of Treasury.

There are two further critical issues: child abuse, and the reintegration and rehabilitation of children. There are children on the streets breaking the law who are kept in reformatory centres. They shouldn't be in prison, but reformatories have only half the capacity, and there are only three of them.

Regarding those with Disabilities, the Ministry attended a Global Disability Summit in London where the Minister made commitments to improve services for those with disabilities. There are two plans going forward: a National Plan of Action, and a National Mainstreaming Strategy. The Ministry is currently seeking capital for these institutions.

For social protection, the Malawi Government just launched the Malawi National Support Plan – a five year strategy guiding the conduct of social protection in Malawi. The first Social Support Plan focused on distinctive social protection instruments, such as microfinance. The second Plan looks at a paradigm shift to focus on thematic areas: 1) Consumption Support – provision of support to vulnerable households, 2) Resilience – to focus on households or individuals to become more resilient, and 3) Social Protection – for those affected by climate change, looking at a sustainable way of delivering aid especially during disasters like drought and famine. The Ministry converges the benefits of the programmes for maximum impact on households in order to strengthen systems, structures and institutional knowledge for delivering social protection.

4. Q&A with Dr Esmie Kainja and Laurent Kansinjiro, Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare

**Q: Working to raise the quality of education in Malawi and children's needs both in school and those outside of it, ie. Girls with disabilities or girls living in the streets, which girls are the hardest to reach that we should be seeking out?**

The Ministry of Gender works closely with the Ministries of Education, Youth, and Health with whom we share core values and visions. The hardest to reach might be the level of vulnerability, including young girls who are pregnant or with no money. Issues of disability also creates vulnerability, poverty itself, and children from poverty are stigmatised. There are also outliers geographically.

**Q: What is the government doing about economic empowerment, and how much has the Government of Malawi put into the economic empowerment fund? How can people access it? What else is the Government of Malawi doing about gender-based violence?**

There are guidelines for the fund which the Ministry of Gender is working with the Ministry of Finance on to access the fund through proposals. Some may apply through cooperatives, or as individual businesses with good proposals. There is a Committee and a permanent Secretary that will monitor how the grants are offered. They will be critically scrutinised. At the moment, the Ministry is finalising those documents so that the Ministry of Finance can approve them. The Head of State has already approved them.

Regarding gender-based violence, there is a proposal which is being funded by the Norwegian Government called the 50/50 Campaign. There is a network for those who are planning to campaign at council level and parliament level. They'll also share information through social media. The Ministry has also created a room where people can share information electronically, and someone will respond to their queries right away. Challenges are capacity building and financial support, as prospective candidates require money, training and resources.

**Q: How can we navigate the challenges of working in partnership with the Ministries? Challenges include where we are asked for allowances for Ministry staff to support the projects, but this is contrary to the Scottish Government's policies and guidelines.**

Partners complement government efforts and usually those arrangements are welcomed, but it is understood that allowances are an issue. There are regulations for the administration of allowances in place, and the Government of Malawi also seeks to make sure those guidelines are followed. The Government needs partners to deliver on programmes, and it is understood that the money is equally taxpayer's money in Malawi and in Scotland. It is in our interest to work with partners that complement government efforts, so contravening these rules cause complications. It helps when partners work with the district through the Ministry of Gender because they are custodians of the people. If the Ministry is aware that you are operating in a certain area, then the Ministry can coordinate. At the local level, it is the social district welfare officer and assistants that deputise the efforts. If you reach out to them, and the Ministry is made aware of it, then it decreases the potential for abuse of the programme through allowances when the officer and assistants know that they are being monitored at a senior level.

**Q: How can we work with the Ministry if we don't have the networks and resources, ie. Large amounts of money?**

Work through the Malawi Scotland Partnership (MaSP) and the SMP. Malawian partners should already be members of MaSP. MaSP is core-funded by the Scottish Government to enable and coordinate efforts.

##### 5. Priorities for the Malawi NGO Board, *Voice Mhone*

Mr Voice Mhone introduced himself as the Chief Executive of the NGO Board in Malawi, which operates under the Ministry of Gender. Within the law, there is a provision where NGO's who want to raise money or public benefits should register as an NGO. Only after registering with the NGO Board will you be recognised. Community-based organisations should also register with District Offices. In order to promote the confidence of the public, reports should be submitted to the NGO Board who acts as a repository. Reports are then accessible to the public and available for scrutiny. Current rates of submission of reports to the NGO Board is at 25%, which is not satisfactory so the Board is looking at accountability. The goal is to promote accountability and promote democracy. Within the aid landscape, partners have been working in Malawi but doing it 'off budget', or outside of the

Government, so support was going through the NGO's but they were not being accountable in terms of reporting. Currently, off budget is at 30%. In 2016, NGO's international development income was reported as US \$275 million per year, but across all NGO's, it was actually US \$1.3 billion. The NGO sector in Malawi is receiving a lot of resources and there are major NGO's working in the country, but what is needed most is coordination. The effects of poor coordination have brought the NGO Board to a situation where everyone is targeted in equal measure. This is not helpful, as it prevents them from targeting those who need it most, like women, children, and those with disabilities. The motivation to attend this meeting is to demonstrate that when NGO activities are coordinated, it is easier to demonstrate what the money is actually doing. There needs to be joint planning, implementation of programmes, as well as encouraging transparency and accountability. The Malawian Government does not fund the NGO Board, which was a conscious decision to have them be kept separate.

6. Q&A with Mr Voice Mhone, Chief Executive of the NGO Board

**Q: Are there any guidelines for reporting requirements to the NGO Board?**

Yes, at the beginning of the year. Don't do separate reports. Send the same audit report that you submit to the Scottish Government, to the NGO Board. For organisations that work in multiple different countries, there should be a consolidated page for Malawi.

**Q: Within the figure of US \$1.3 billion, is there an analysis of how much of that funding is reaching field operations compared to administration?**

By building capacity in the NGO sector, it is easier to demonstrate where the money is going exactly.

**Q: What is the advantage of a small NGO in Scotland being registered in Malawi?**

There are three advantages: 1) operating within the law provides its own advantages, 2) you can draw on the Board for information, and 3) you can use the NGO Board's policies which are currently being drafted.

**Q: If you are a charity in Scotland, do you want to see the charity in Scotland's accounts for registration?**

Making sure that the partner in Malawi is registered is the most important factor. If you do not register them and you are sending funds across, then you are acting like a donor. If you want work to be done through your partner's offices in Malawi, they need to be registered. Just as you would submit an annual report in Scotland, your partner should submit theirs to the NGO Board.

## 7. Closing remarks

Kathy closed the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and especially to the Malawian panel, and by offering support to members in coordinating with the Malawi Scotland Partnership (MaSP). She reminded members that the SMP would be hosting a visiting Malawian choir during the Edinburgh Fringe Festival on the 17<sup>th</sup> August. She invited members to stay and network over tea and Malawian coffee.