*Address by His Excellency Prof. Arthur Peter Mutharika, outlining national lockdown response to Covid-19, to begin in Malawi on 21st April.*

My Fellow Malawians

Today, Government has declared a 21 Day Lockdown. It will initially be effective at midnight on Saturday, 18th April, 2020 and it will end on Saturday 9th May, 2020, at midnight.

This lockdown may be extended beyond 9th May as circumstances warrant.

The Minister has done so using powers vested in him under the Public Health Act. In his declaration of the lockdown, the Minister outlined specific measures that will be in force during the period of the lockdown.

I would like to urge you to fully comply with the measures because they are for the good of our country.

Currently, Malawi has suffered 2 deaths. As I speak, the United States of America has lost over 23,000 lives. Italy has lost over 20,000 people. The United Kingdom has lost over 11,000 lives.

Many more countries across the world have lost many lives. All our neighbouring countries have Coronavirus cases and lives are being lost. If we are not careful, Malawi can lose up to 50,000 lives. We need to act more now!

While we are on Lockdown, Government will continue taking actions that should save lives.

The actions include:

1. Intensifying laboratory testing for Coronavirus. We have now set up an additional testing laboratory at Mzuzu Central Hospital which now brings the number of testing laboratories in the country to four.

2. Continuing with the recruitment of additional health personnel across the country. We have already recruited 626 healthcare workers out of 2000 announced in my previously address.

3. Deploying security personnel to provide border security patrols and mounting of road blocks in strategic points country wide.

4. Providing Personnel Protective Equipment (PPEs) to health facilities in all the districts; and

5. Conducting massive awareness campaigns to ensure that members of the public are well informed on Coronavirus.

Fighting Coronavirus is a challenging war for everyone, everywhere. It is also a very expensive war. As a nation, we require about MK150 billion for the implementation of the National COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan. We need to unite.

Let me once again appeal to all political leaders that we need to join our hands in fighting this Coronavirus pandemic. Noone must take advantage of the suffering of people and politicize Coronavirus. This is not a time for politics. This is a time for saving lives.

Coronavirus is a real threat. As your President, I will do everything possible for us to save lives. Let us unite to save lives.

Thank you very much for your attention.