

# INNOVATE MALAWI: A PATH TO PROSPERITY



UNITED FOR CHANGE

UNITED FOR DELIVERY

UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT 2025 MANIFESTO





UDF - PRESIDENT

Atupele Austin Muluzi

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## Fellow Malawians,

We stand at a critical juncture in our nation's history. After decades of dependency on donor aid and witnessing the struggles of ordinary citizens who lack access to basic necessities like food, clean water, and medicine, it is time for a fundamental transformation of how we approach development and governance.

The United Democratic Front presents this manifesto as our covenant with the people of Malawi, fully aligned with our national development agenda, Malawi 2063 (MW2063). Our vision harmonizes with the MW2063 aspiration of building an inclusively wealthy and self-reliant industrialized upper-middle-income country by 2063.

This manifesto is built on the foundation of our Business First Plan (BFP) - a comprehensive strategy that directly contributes to achieving the MW2063 pillars of Agricultural Productivity and Commercialization, Industrialization, and Urbanization, while strengthening all seven enablers: Mindset Change, Effective Governance Systems and Institutions, Enhanced Public Sector Performance, Private Sector Dynamism, Human Capital Development, Economic Infrastructure, and Environmental Sustainability.





- Our approach transitions Malawi from donor dependency to a robust economy driven by investment, trade, innovation, and private sector-led growth - fully supporting the MW2063 vision of inclusive wealth creation and self-reliance. We will prudently utilise our own domestic resources to drive our development while leveraging on resources from development partners as as a
1. launchpad for more sustainable financing options.

Our approach is three-pronged: stabilization, innovation, and growth of the Malawian economy.

We commit to putting people first, ensuring that every policy decision we make serves the interests of ordinary Malawians while building a sustainable future for our children and their children, in pursuit of the ten aspirations of MW2063.

**Atupele Austin Muluzi**



## 1. INTRODUCTION: OUR VISION







The United Democratic Front's vision is fully aligned with Malawi 2063 (MW2063) - our nation's long-term development vision adopted in 2021. We share the aspiration for an inclusively wealthy and self-reliant industrialized upper-middle-income country by 2063. Our manifesto directly supports the MW2063 Ten Aspirations:

1. An inclusively wealthy and self-reliant industrialized upper middle-income country - through our **Business First Plan**
2. A vibrant knowledge-based economy - via our digital innovation and BPO initiatives
3. World-class urban centers and tourism hubs - through our infrastructure and tourism development
4. A united, peaceful, patriotic people - via good governance and social inclusion
5. Effective governance systems with rule of law - through our anti-corruption and institutional reforms
6. High-performing professional public service - via civil service modernization
7. Dynamic and vibrant private sector - as the cornerstone of our **Business First Plan**
8. Globally competitive economic infrastructure - through strategic infrastructure investment
9. Globally competitive human resource - via education and skills development
10. Environmentally sustainable economy - through our green growth initiatives



Our policies are structured around the three MW2063 Pillars:

### **Pillar 1: Agricultural Productivity and Commercialization**

- Transition to high-value crops (avocado, macadamia, cashew nuts)
- Value chain development and agro-processing
- Market access through regional trade agreements

### **Pillar 2: Industrialization**

- Critical minerals beneficiation and value addition
- Manufacturing sector development
- Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) and digital services

### **Pillar 3: Urbanization**

- Smart city development with modern amenities
- Tourism hub creation
- Urban infrastructure modernization







Our manifesto addresses all seven MW2063 Enablers:

1. **Mindset Change** - From aid dependency to trade-focused entrepreneurship
2. **Effective Governance** - Zero tolerance on corruption and institutional reforms
3. **Enhanced Public Sector Performance** - Civil service digitization and efficiency
4. **Private Sector Dynamism** - Business-friendly policies and investment facilitation
5. **Human Capital Development** - Education reform and skills development
6. **Economic Infrastructure** - Roads, energy, ICT, and transport connectivity
7. **Environmental Sustainability** - Green growth and climate adaptation





### **Mission**

To transform Malawi from donor dependency to economic independence through business-friendly policies, strategic trade partnerships, good governance, and inclusive development that puts people first, in full alignment with MW2063 aspirations.

### **Our Core Values**

- Mphamvu ku Anthu (Power to the People)
- Transparency and Accountability
- Business First – Economic Freedom and Innovation
- Social Justice and Inclusion
- Pan-African Unity and Cooperation
- Youth involvement – “Join the Movement”



Malawi is grappling with a severe economic crisis that demands urgent and decisive action. The statistics paint a sobering picture:

- **Inflation:** Currently at 30%, crippling families and businesses
- **Poverty:** 50.7% of Malawians lived below the poverty line in 2020, projected to surge to 80% in 2025
- **Trade Deficit:** We require \$3.2 billion annually for essential imports but generate only \$1 billion from exports
- **Donor Dependency:** Traditional donor funding is expected to decline by 50% in 2025
- **Foreign Exchange:** Dangerously low reserves threaten economic stability
- **Employment:** Rising unemployment, especially among youth and women

These challenges are compounded by climate change, shifting global politics, and economic disruptions that demand we rethink how we create wealth and stability. This crisis is also our opportunity for transformation.





**BUSINESS FIRST**



The **Business First** Plan (BFP) is a bold strategy to establish a robust shift from donor dependency to a future based on investment, trade, innovation, domestic wealth generation, and private sector-led growth. Malawi has the resources, the people, and the drive to turn this crisis into an opportunity for lasting prosperity.

### **Trade, Not Aid: Supporting Wealth Creation**

The time has come to embrace a "Trade, Not Aid" strategy, that directly supports inclusive wealth creation and self-reliance. Our economy must be driven by investment, domestic wealth generation, innovation, and regional and international trade. The key objectives of this aspiration include:

- Bridging the \$2.2 billion trade deficit through increased exports
- Diversifying from traditional crops to higher-value commodities
- Leveraging AfCFTA and SADC market of 363 million people
- Position Malawi as a regional trade and investment hub



## **Stabilize the Economy and Increase Forex**

To stabilize the Malawian economy and address the forex crisis, a number of key policies need to be implemented:

- Liberalize the exchange rate within a controlled band to attract investors and boost exports
- Prioritize forex allocation toward productive sectors, such as:
  - Machinery for production
  - Technology infrastructure
  - Agricultural inputs for food security
- Restrict luxury imports that drain foreign exchange reserves
- Implement "bought in forex, sold in forex" policy for non-essential goods

## **Open the Economy for Business, Trade, and Tourism**

This will involve the following:

- Visas on arrival for all countries
- End landing fees for airlines
- 30-Day Rule for licensing: "approve it or lose it"
- Rapid Pothole System for road infrastructure
- Air Access Plan to connect Malawi to global markets
- Enhanced rail connectivity for efficient cargo transport





## **Empower the Most Vulnerable for Economic Participation**

Social protection and economic inclusion must be made available to all Malawians. To achieve this, the UDF government will implement the following:

- Food and fertilizer schemes through transparent public tenders
- End export bans to allow farmers to sell at competitive prices
- Abolish minimum prices that limit farmers' market access
- Promote agricultural cooperatives for economies of scale
- Direct remaining donor support toward human capital development in education and health



## **Drive Growth Through Strategic Sectors**

Highly productive sectors will be targeted by the UDF government to ensure maximum benefit to the Malawian people. Priority sectors will be:

- Critical minerals (rare-earths, niobium, rutile, uranium, lithium)
- Agriculture (avocado, legumes, macadamia, cashew nuts)
- Tourism (eliminate VAT on forex-generating activities)
- Energy (renewable and conventional sources)
- Digital innovation and Business Process Outsourcing

The **Business First** Plan also accommodates for sector-specific policies, such as:

- Benchmark mining regulations to international best standards
- Establish Malawi as an innovation hub for Africa
- Support AI-driven solutions and digital services such as Blockchain technology
- Create startup incubation programs





## AGRICULTURE & FOOD SECURITY

Our agricultural strategy directly implements the vision of a vibrant knowledge-based economy with a strong and competitive manufacturing industry that is driven by a productive and commercially vibrant agriculture. It is built on the following pillars:

### **Moving Beyond Subsistence**

- Transition from tobacco and maize to high-value crops
- Promote drought-resistant varieties adapted to climate change
- Develop value chains for avocado, macadamia, cashew nuts, and legumes
- Support mechanization and modern farming techniques

### **Market Access and Trade**

- Remove restrictions on agricultural exports (Self-reliance through Trade)
- Facilitate regional trade through SADC and AfCFTA (Regional Integration)
- Develop agricultural processing industries
- Establish commodity exchanges for price discovery (Market-driven Economy)

### **Climate-Smart Agriculture**

- Promote conservation agriculture techniques (Environmentally Sustainable Economy)
- Expand irrigation infrastructure (Economic Infrastructure Enabler)
- Support agroforestry and sustainable land management (Environmental Sustainability)
- Provide climate information services to farmers





## **Critical Minerals Development – The “New Oil” for Malawi:**

- Develop rare-earths, niobium, rutile, uranium, and lithium deposits
- Attract responsible international investors
- Ensure environmental sustainability in mining operations
- Create local value addition opportunities

## **Malawi Sovereign Wealth Fund (MSWF) – Securing Future Generations:**

- Establish national savings account from natural resource proceeds
- Invest in classic and digital assets
- Fund major infrastructure, education, and health projects
- Avoid the resource curse through transparent management

## **Environmental Conservation & Sustainable Development**

- Protect forests and water resources
- Promote renewable energy adoption
- Implement climate adaptation measures
- Support community-based natural resource management







If Malawi is to really benefit from the floundering tourism sector, we must be bold in our review and implementation of our associated policies. The current strategy lacks a real “master plan” offering a consistent brand that our tourism operators can support. We continue to lag behind competing countries in the region due to a lack of leadership, promotion and effective networks for the sector to work in partnership with each other and with Government.

#### UDF will:

- Actively promote domestic and regional tourism with a strategic view of the brand that we seek to promote, using all the tools available to us. Malawi will be marketed internationally as the “Warm Heart of Africa”
- Provide incentives and affordable tourist packages for Malawians to travel within the country.
- Establish a financial support such as sovereign guarantees to underpin infrastructure development by the private sector in-order to accelerate growth of the industry. Initial focus will be on existing resorts and establishments who would be given support and advice on potential growth areas.
- Invest in domestic and regional tourism, private sector investment especially in water tourism, partner with the East African Community and SADC members to pursue multi-destination activities, establish wild-life reserves that preserve the environment.
- Continue to develop our wildlife reserves and national parks and develop a workable compensation scheme for economic losses due to wildlife conservation throughout the country.
- Eliminate VAT on forex-generating tourism activities
- To celebrate our heritage and preserve our culture, we will support local arts and crafts industries, develop cultural festivals and events, and ensure protection of historical sites and monuments





Our education agenda seeks to equip Malawi with a globally competitive and highly motivated human resource, from primary all the way through tertiary education. We will streamline and rationalise the education policy and implementation framework to re-organize the education sector and generate a holistic and multi-sector approach to education sector reforms.

### **Access and Quality**

- Inclusive access – End the quota system for university admission
- Introduce practical curricula aligned with market demands
- Make tertiary education accessible from primary school level
- Skills development – Establish technical and vocational training centers in every district

### **Skills Development for the Future Economy**

- Digital literacy programs for all citizens
- Entrepreneurship education at all levels
- STEM education enhancement
- Language skills development

### **Higher Education and Research**

- Establish centers of excellence in priority sectors
- Promote research and development in agriculture, mining, and technology
- Create innovation hubs and incubators
- Foster university-industry partnerships



To fully reap the benefits of a functional education system, we will also implement the following:

- Increase and protect budgetary allocations to recurrent and development spending, equitable distribution of resources across and within districts/schools along with expenditure tracking and other oversight mechanisms.
- Ensure more teachers are available, better trained and in the right place, especially in rural areas.
- Seek to keep all children in school till at least 15 years of age with a focus on girls to mitigate the challenges of early pregnancy and marriage. Involve parents in their children's education through School Governing Bodies such that they have a voice in their school's development and they better appreciate the value of keeping their children in school.
- Develop early childhood development centres to support and protect the poorest children particularly with regards appropriate nutrition that is so vital for their early year's development. Make the decentralized education system work to ensure that every child has a text book, a trained and motivated teacher and enough time in the classroom to learn and comprehend.
- Invest in M&E systems to measure and monitor learning outcomes. Strengthen capacity of MoEST to set norms & standards and provide leadership.
- Develop a strong forum for vocational training establishments with employers and industry and professional bodies to ensure that we are training the right numbers of people for the right jobs with the right skills. This will also provide an opportunity to better focus vocational training to roles fit for a modern economy such as IT and engineering. Work with our development partners to establish a means tested subsidy programme for our young people to attend university.







## HEALTH & SOCIAL WELFARE





The UDF is committed to continuing to strive for full universal health coverage that remains free to all at the point of access. However, this does come at a cost and that cost grows year on year with our rapidly growing population. Our budgetary allocation is one of the most generous in the region, but this is still insufficient to adequately resource the number of healthcare workers to properly support our health service. We must have a more honest and detailed discussion about health financing that takes a more comprehensive view of the whole sector. The **Malawi Health Sector Strategic Plan 2** offers a credible roadmap to further improve the health of Malawi. The UDF will implement this plan with a focus on three core priorities; driving further efficiencies through better coordination and streamlining of health programmes such that we can derive more value from what is already committed, identify further savings in our health budget to allocate more resources for healthcare workers, particularly nurses and midwives and identify a sustainable solution to increase our healthcare infrastructure.

The UDF will:

- Develop district hospitals in major cities as well as additional local health facilities to cope with the growing population.
- Pursue a robust e-health programme to improve the management of patient care and improve the efficiency of managing the health service.
- Implement the power for health strategy that has been in development to deliver reliable, sustainable power to all healthcare facilities.
- Identify additional resources to increase the health care worker establishment, particularly nurses and midwives to a level that supports our growing population.
- Increase focus on family planning services and maternal healthcare support. Invest in public health behaviour change programmes to reduce the burden of preventable illness and diseases on our health service. There is an opportunity to develop a centre of excellence for behaviour change in health for the region given the depth of understanding that we have of our population following the most recent census.
- Maintain our commitment to the implementation of the latest Health Sector Strategic Plan together with the supporting focussed plans for individual health issues. The focus will be to further the coordination of programmes to maximise efficiency and derive maximum value from the investment made.

### **Universal Health Access**

- Improve primary healthcare delivery
- Strengthen district hospitals and health centers
- Ensure adequate medical supplies and equipment
- Expand health insurance coverage

### **Disease Prevention and Health Promotion**

- Strengthen immunization programs
- Combat malaria, HIV/AIDS, and tuberculosis
- Improve maternal and child health services
- Promote nutrition and food security programs

### **Social Protection**

- Expand social cash transfer programs
- Support orphans and vulnerable children
- Provide assistance to elderly and disabled citizens
- Implement emergency response mechanisms for disasters



## INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Malawi's economic performance over the last decade has meant that there has been insufficient resources to wholly support the levels of investment required on our **MW 2063 First 10-Year Implementation Plan (MIP-1)** offers a reasonably robust plan but instead we have seen our precious resources spent on projects for political gain or for vanity purposes rather than the development of our economy. What investment that has been made has been poorly spent, with little engagement with the private sector to wholly understand what they need to support an investment.

We will expand and modernize infrastructure to modernize the economy based on the priorities laid out in MIP-1. Our focus will be to implement the existing national transport strategy, moving freight to our railways and establishing better rail linkages with our neighbours. This will mean investigating the development of new transport nodes and linkages, particularly in the North. We will look to develop public private partnerships (PPP) for our main trunk roads to free up resources to invest more on access to the rural areas. We will establish a national water management plan to establish an investment plan for irrigation across the country, making use of all our water resources.







## The UDF will:

- Strengthen the development of the national rail infrastructure to increase the capacity for both freight and passengers, particularly along the Nacala corridor and the North to Tanzania to connect with the TAZARA network.
- Investigate the commercial viability of new transport nodes to better connect Malawi with the region.
- Implement the National Transport Strategy that has received strong support from our development partners.
- Address poor governance, bureaucratic red tape and financing constraints.
- Finalize the institutional framework for irrigation services and develop potential high-return small-scale irrigation schemes.
- Develop public private partnerships for the main trunk roads across Malawi.
- Implement Rapid Pothole System for road maintenance
- Develop air transport infrastructure
- Improve rural access roads
- Diversify energy sources (solar/hydro/wind/thermal), while working to expand grid connectivity to rural areas
- Promote off-grid renewable energy solutions
- Develop regional power trading arrangements
- Boost digital infrastructure by expanding broadband internet access, developing e-government services, supporting digital payment systems and creating technology parks and innovation centers





Having led the most significant changes to land legislation since our independence we are committed to seeing their implementation. The changes they will bring will ensure that we can attract real investment for capital projects in the country.

To support these legislative changes, we must invest more into planning, particularly urban planning. This needs to be based upon an accurate understanding of land tenure, meaning an effective digital land registry that identifies land owners properly. This land registry and tenure will then provide investors with the confidence they need in the land that they seek to invest in.

Our housing stock must be improved, not through expensive and unequal subsidy projects that only benefit a few, instead, we will work with the Malawi Housing Corporation to develop public private partnership projects with secured returns. This will mean reviewing the sectional titling legislation to improve the development of multi-use and multi-site facilities such as apartment blocks and will provide security of tenure for the residents and a marketable product for investors. Concurrently, we will review the Landlord and Tennant Act, and enact a Rent Act to ensure that rents are paid in Malawi and not abroad, to ensure that revenues are properly captured and that rents are more effectively governed; this to protect the most vulnerable from exploitation by inscrutable or irresponsible international landlords.

The UDF will:

- Implement all of the new land legislation acts to establish equal rights to land for all Malawians.
- Develop a digital land registry to establish an accurate understanding of land ownership and tenure across the country.
- Develop further our capacity for planning, particularly urban planning so that we make better use of the land that we have.
- Make the dream of household ownership a reality for Malawians by underwriting capital market development financing purposes



Malawi's growth potential remains constrained by the lack of reliable power, particularly in attracting international private sector investment. Outages and load shedding in Malawi are far worse than our neighbouring countries.

Almost half of formal sector enterprises have a back-up generator which double the share found in other similar African low-income countries.

We believe that power must be affordable, but we need to look differently at how we support the generation and distribution of power. Relying on state monopolies only feeds inefficiencies and constrains competition, meaning that prices are adversely affected. We now have an opportunity to leapfrog technologies, much as we did with cellphone infrastructure. We will break up the monopoly of power generation and distribution through regulated competition and will exploit the efficiency of micro grids, new battery technology and the full blend of renewable energy sources to include waste to energy, wind and solar.

Malawi's mining resources are largely mapped but high costs and low returns mean that efforts need to be undertaken to develop the sector further to ensure it becomes an element of our economic growth. However, we support further studies of existing sites to identify any credible sources of new technology metals or minerals.

The UDF will:

- Ensure that electricity generation covers local demand reliably with affordable and sustainable power.
- Upgrade transmission and distribution systems to reduce energy losses and improve both energy efficiency and transmission interconnections to the Southern African Power Pool (SAPP) to diversify supply sources.
- Reform the monopoly of power generation and distribution through regulated competition.
- Establish the necessary regulations to allow for micro grids while ensuring that consumers pay a fair price.
- Stay on course to meet maximum demand of 600MW and cater for needs of domestic customers expected to rise by at least 1 million by 2030.
- Reform power tariffs and address inefficiencies such as by ensuring 100% collection of bill payments, better recovery of costs, maintenance, distribution losses and capital budget execution.
- Benchmark mining legislations on best practices globally.



Inclusive growth means developing our economy for all, that includes developing real jobs for everyone. We, as a country must change – we must recognise that we are competing real jobs that maximise the skills, interests and energy of our people, particularly the youth, where unemployment is so rife.

Malawi should be the next big location for outsourced talent, replicating the success India has had in marketing its educated populace. Call centres, data hubs, engineering and maintenance hubs and responsible tourism are all opportunities we should be aspiring to grow. The more jobs we create at each level of our economy, creates further wealth through the secondary economies; a middle-class household may be able to employ a cook or a driver, a household may look to buy a bicycle or use a taxi to get to market. As the economy grows, we will ensure that the wealth spreads!

Harnessing our “demographic dividend” involves carrying out the following:

- Creating youth employment programs
- Supporting young entrepreneurs and startups
- Establishing youth innovation and technology centers
- Promotional sports and cultural activities





The UDF are passionate believers of entrepreneurship. We must build the confidence of our young people such that they are able to develop their own enterprises. We have some amazing creative talent across the country - fashion designers, musicians, artists and digital developers. We must look to showcase this talent nationally and internationally. At the same time, we will develop robust forums for our vocational training establishments, employers and the civil service to ensure that we are training the right people in the right skills and the right number to support the number of jobs available.

The UDF will:

- Strive to create sustainable and meaningful jobs particularly for the youth. Increase access to finance and provide enterprise development skills to the youth. Expand technical skills training, especially to females, as we further develop the vocational training establishments created over the last five years.
- Reform the tertiary education system by making training accessible from primary school and introducing a practical curriculum.
- Roll out mass participation and opportunity development centres, to offer sports, cultural and recreational facilities after school hours. Encourage the participation of the youth in sporting activities as a means of further developing individuals to be ready for the workplace. We will adequately resource the football and netball national teams such that they will better offer an example of dedication and professionalism to our young people.
- Establish Opportunity Centres which offer integrated services for youths, to include information on private sector opportunities, access to education and training opportunities, assistance in writing CV's and applying for jobs, placement in apprentice schemes/internship programmes and support programmes for small businesses and informal traders.
- Harness youth political participation and leadership: through political debates in both formal and informal institutions, especially within their communities, nurture pro- active youth organizations and give them space to influence policy and shape dialogue. Invest and provide space for state and non-state actors to groom leaders: leadership courses/mentoring for transformational (and not transactional) leaders.
- Further develop a working bursary system for tertiary education.



The UDF understands the role of sport in Malawi's democracy, especially in shaping and influencing our identity as a nation as well as the youth. Sports can also empower and uplift Malawians into a proud and unified nation.



The UDF will:

- Establish youth centres, to provide sports, especially to girls including victims of domestic violence, empower young people with one stop shop on a range of issues- literary, business development skills and recreational facilities.
- Develop the sports industry through formulating a sports industry policy and developing the sports market, set out general norms and standards and bolster sports infrastructure also as part of revenue generation.
- Establish a legal framework to govern the sports market. Develop a coherent approach to seeking private sector financing for the sports sector and encourage more robust private sector engagement in the sports market.
- Support competitive athletes so that they can become sports ambassadors, develop a pipeline of sporting excellence and promote participation in recreational sport and unite the nation.
- Conduct audits of sports facilities and use information from the audits to develop plans to assist under-resourced areas and develop sport infrastructure.
- Promote school and student sport as a mechanism to develop healthy lifestyles among youth, discourage anti-social behaviours and develop a pipeline of sporting talent for national teams.
- Invest in sporting facilities, especially for people with disabilities.
- Develop an effective and integrated sports academy system that will develop a pipeline of sporting excellence through national corps of talent scouts, coordinated sports science and medical support, assist competitive athletes in entering professional sport careers, coordinated support to sport coaches.
- Ensure participation of grassroots communities in sport rather than artificially manipulating composition of elite sporting teams. Improve the governance of sporting bodies by supporting sporting federations through training in financial management, corporate governance, and engagement with Parliament.
- Build a Football Academy in the Central Region which will be a school of excellence for talented young boys and girls. Identify and secure sponsorship for the most successful and popular football clubs. Build strong grass-root football development programs in all the districts to identify and groom talented football players.





Malawi has high levels of poverty concentrated in rural areas. An estimated 50% of the population is classified as vulnerable and our social protection interventions, including the Social Cash Transfer Programme, are not coordinated, are marred by operational anomalies related to beneficiary identification, sustainability and significance. Most interventions, except for public works programmes, have limited coverage leading to further inequalities within the country, often based on local political allegiance. They also have different targeting mechanisms, which can lead to duplication or worse, missing vulnerable households.

Although the **Social Support Policy** was adopted in 2012, implementation has been poor and Malawians continue to face very real challenges with the stabilization reforms and the state of our economy. Women's participation remains weak and sadly, Malawi will not deliver on all of its female-related MDG's. Efforts to address gender inequality are constrained by poor enforcement and monitoring of gender strategies, cultural bias, inadequate resource allocation to deliver on gender targets.

The **Adolescent Girls and Young Women Strategy** which is meant to take a holistic approach to gender issues has yet to be properly implemented.

The UDF will:



- Adopt and legislate a nationally agreed working definition of poverty as “the inability to meet minimum basic needs of food, clothing, shelter, livelihood and employment, education, primary and reproductive health care, basic utilities, energy and power”
- Review the **National Vulnerability Assessment and Poverty Mapping Framework** to identify and map those persons and communities most in need and develop a database that will guide, in a coordinated way to inform implementation of social protection programmes.
- Implement the **Adolescent Girls and Young Women Strategy**, evaluating learnings for further policy and legislative change across government. Ensure that parents or caregivers of every child born into poverty, are able to provide the child with the nutrition, health care and education they need to grow.
- Set out a clear and coherent strategy for operationalizing, implementing and monitoring the **National Social Protection Policy** through a package of well linked permanent, predictable and scalable programmes. Focus will include cost effective social welfare and care to marginalized groups (including women, vulnerable children and the disabled) and support to employment creation/labour market programmes.
- Ensure a pool of well-trained social service professionals who will ensure effective delivery systems for social support-including community based targeting (especially of marginalized groups including women), management information systems, and unified registry of beneficiaries, enhanced monitoring and evaluation systems.







## WOMEN & SOCIAL PROTECTION/INCLUSION

- Increase number of women in the financial sector, especially in rural areas and provide deliberate focus on skills building of female entrepreneurs and leaders.
- Set out a new vision and strategy for nutrition and community-based development programmes to prevent and control nutrition disorders, particularly among vulnerable groups. Increase access to nutrition information and services and prevent growth faltering in early childhood.
- Support active labour market and employment programmes. Develop clear linkages between impact of stabilization programmes with initiatives to cushion the most vulnerable, especially the legacy of inflationary pressures and economy rebalancing. Targeted support to rural and urban households (labour intensive public works programmes) and poor farming communities (rural livelihoods through irrigation) to increase incomes, enable them to manage shocks better and build household assets.
- Strengthen community oversight to monitor potential abuse of social safety nets and intervene where this is the case.
- Support people with disabilities through increased access to education and job opportunities, to ensure that they can access all the support required and promote their economic and social inclusion.
- Establish Village/Community Nkhokwe's managed by the community to overcome food shortages. Develop new programmes to better protect vulnerable groups, particularly those with albinism so that all Malawians can enjoy safety and security to develop.
- Reform the pension system, guided by a review of public and private sector systems to determine strengths, weakness and specific strategies to ensure future protection of livelihoods of pensioners and their dependents.
- Implement the new land legislation that provides for women and child headed households. Assurance of transfer of ownership of land, property, livestock, and all other movable/immovable assets in their names, rather than permitting their titles to pass on to the next male heir in the extended family.
- Enhance access to insurance against risks, guided by a comprehensive review of the National Crop Insurance Scheme to assess the contribution cap, the fund management and the level of equity among contributors
- Address gender-based violence and discrimination



If we are to deal with corruption, we must challenge the symptoms and the culture that has been established. We need to understand what the drivers are, weaknesses in the systems and be robust in how we deal with them. This takes leadership at every level of our society, but particularly at the very top. There cannot be any hiding places, if you are in a position of leadership, or supporting that leadership then you must accept that you are an example for all Malawi. Any allegation must be properly investigated by a wholly independent body and any guilt must be prosecuted fully.

### **Zero Tolerance on Corruption**

Our anti-corruption agenda directly supports MW2063's aspiration for "Effective governance systems and institutions with strict adherence to the rule of law." Our anti-corruption efforts will include:

- Prosecute corrupt officials from day one
- Repatriate stolen funds from abroad
- Strengthen prevention mechanisms
- Digitize government services to reduce opportunities for corruption
- Mandatory asset declarations for all public officials



### **Public Financial Management, Procurement, Auditing and Accounting**

We will reform and strengthen systems that secure and guarantee the integrity of the public purse so that it benefits all Malawians. We will ensure these systems limit the scope for abuse of state resources for corrupt practices. We will increase the efficiency and transparency of revenue collection.

### **Public Sector Reforms**

We will transform the public service into a world-class institution, extending to local government by 2030. We will build the capacity of the public sector to implement informed policy and regulate service delivery. We will make the public sector accountable to Malawians. Modernization initiatives to reform the civil service will include:

- Incentivize performance and innovation (High-performing Public Service)
- Digital transformation of government services (Effective Governance Systems)
- Align civil service with global competitiveness standards (Globally Competitive Infrastructure)
- Merit-based recruitment and promotion (Professional Public Service)
- Continuous professional development programs (Human Capital Development)

### **Decentralization**

Decentralization has been enacted; we must now ensure it works so that all Malawians can benefit from more local governance. That means supporting civil servants so that they have the knowledge and skills to manage the new responsibility they have. It means developing more open and louder channels for citizens to engage with Government. We will continue the transformational reforms and further build systems to better deliver decentralized government. . This will include improving leadership of district councils and improve regional representation within Cabinet.

Some of the cost-cutting measures to be implemented include:

- No new government vehicles for 2 years or until economy stabilizes
- Eliminate excessive convoys and ceremonies
- Performance-based accountability for all government officials
- Streamline and digitize civil service operations
- Results-oriented governance systems



## PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, AUDITING, PROCUREMENT AND ACCOUNTING



Weak financial management, auditing, procurement and accounting systems underpin Malawi's failure to use its public purse for the best interest of all Malawians. The country continues to suffer from weak fiscal discipline, inappropriate allocation of resources to sub-optimal priorities and resultant dismal service delivery. Government leadership in strengthening these systems has been weak with multiple reforms that have been largely driven by external partners. The implementation of robust legislation already in place (the **Public Procurement Act** and **PFM Act** and **Public Audit Act**) has been ad-hoc and disappointingly patchy. The public sector faces real capacity constraints in financial management, auditing, procurement and auditing with vacancy rates as high as 44% across these specialized skill areas. Monitoring the efficiency and effectiveness of public finance systems has been weak and as a result they have been prone to grand abuse and corruption.



#### UDF will:

- Determine the causality of corruption and address these issues as a priority. We will establish zero tolerance on corruption, this will not be business as usual, corruption will be prosecuted when discovered and proven. Initiate a stock take of public financial management, procurement, accounting and audit systems and reforms to date, to ascertain key pressure points and prioritize areas for reform.
- Ensure that 100% of contracts are awarded on the basis of open and fair competition. Ensure that 95% of vacant posts are filled in with credible professionals.
- Raise public awareness and establish systems to ensure transparency in public procurement. Establish an e-procurement system, website to display tenders, tender plans and awards.
- Review processes for large procurements. Establish a single-point centre of excellence for grooming and building capacity of financial management, procurement, accounting and auditing professionals to cater across all institutions and specialized sector training e.g. in health and education. Further develop performance audits and ensure annual financial audits are made publicly available to scrutiny.
- Review and strengthen the roles of key stakeholders in financial management and accounting systems: Accountant General, Ministry of Finance, Line Ministries, National Audit Office and Internal Audit Department. Review and strengthen the role of the Financial Intelligence Unit and empower it to investigate cases, monitor suspicious transactions and maintain an overview of commercial bank electronic payment system for international payments.
- Establish a system to monitor large contracts and establish islands of excellence especially in top spending Ministries. Reinforce M&E in procurement, complaint handling systems for all procurement entities, contract management, monitoring by CSO's, community procurement.
- Review and strengthen the role of the PERMU (Public Enterprise Reform and Monitoring Unit) to enforce financial accountability, transparency and corporate governance on parastatals.





Malawi's weak public sector continues to function with extremely stretched human resource capacity. In the absence of robust leadership, a coherent policy and strategy for the sector, reform efforts have been fragmented and have yielded dismal results. The sector is fraught with high vacancy rates, serious skills gaps, recruitment bottlenecks, pay & allowance issues and poor performance management. Good people are not well managed.

This has been exacerbated by poor leadership at the centre. There is also an unhealthy gap between civil servants and political leaders. Importantly, there have been no concrete attempts to make the public sector more accountable to ordinary Malawians. Malawi's leaders have deemed public sector reforms as politically costly given the focus on long term change that such reforms demand. As a result, the public sector has not served Malawi well, rather, it has become a mechanism for distributing public jobs and targeted benefits to the privileged few.



### UDF will:

- Set out a coherent policy and strategic approach for whole of government public sector reform and administration, based on a rigorous evaluation of previous initiatives, building on fresh thinking from an esteemed panel of Malawian experts.
- Strengthen the legal framework governing the efficiency and effectiveness of the public service by consolidating, establishing basic laws, rules and processes for public sector management.
- Develop a public sector leadership cadre, equipped with leadership and management skills, organizational representation, strategic policy/management and results.
- Institute policies and practices to protect staff from vulnerability to infection and support staff living with HIV/AIDS and its associated impacts. Review and strengthen the human resource planning capacity, including reform of HRMIS. Modernize human resource management policies and practices across all levels of government.
- Institute **Service Delivery Pacts**, which will constitute the basis of accountability relationships between the public service and ordinary Malawians and commit the state to become a model employer and an employer of choice for all those committed to serving people.
- Rationalise government departments to eliminate duplicity of functions and other operational challenges related to multiple uncoordinated government ministries, agencies and departments.
- Review and harmonise conditions of service for the entire public service to ensure that remuneration is commensurate with performance. Institute a performance-based recognition and award system in the public service that will ensure and enforce sanctions on individual non-performance and individual accountability for misconduct.
- Promote education and training of all public servants. We will establish a skills development initiative to turn every public sector workplace into a training space and develop conscientious public servants. Place explicit focus on implementation and change of institutional and managerial arrangements and behaviour of public servants.
- We want to change both formal institutions and behaviours towards delivering results. Establish a merit-based promotion system that destroys elements of patronage that have become entrenched in the system.



- Partner with the private sector, to adopt strategies/practices to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the sector. Establish quality, motivation, recruitment and promotion systems and performance management. Improve service delivery through a public service that is of the right size and skills mix, with the requisite motivation, professional ethos, client focus and accountability.
- Increase the number of women in middle and senior levels. Institute leadership development programmes, including for women with understanding of political context and are collaborative. Review pay policy to give adequate compensation for skills, responsibilities and experience. Where required, provide salary supplementation to encourage servants to work in districts.
- Introduce client charters with formal feed-back methods between communities and public servants.
- Establish a “Civil Service Reserve Pool” for retired civil servants as a reservoir of experience that the Government may call upon when required. Members of the pool will be required to attend refresher courses organized by MIM to keep them abreast.
- Reform the Civil Service Commission. Use life-style audits to account for all politicians and public officials sources of wealth.





Malawi has struggled to develop effective decentralization across government or realise local accountability structures remain weak. Political leaders have influenced the shaping of the process negatively, demonstrating that it has been to further interests of the ruling elite rather than ordinary people. Although the law provides that 5% of the net national revenue should be transferred to local assemblies, most are fraught with chronic financial problems.

This in turn means that critical public services, particularly health and education suffer. Aside from the poor financial support to local government, little or no effective training and education has been given to the civil servants charged with the significantly increased responsibilities that they have found themselves with.

Leadership of district councils have failed to appreciate the importance of their role and our four cities lack representative leadership. We will review the leadership of district councils and their relationship with central government, we will also improve representation of each of the four regions at Cabinet level and establish an elected mayor for each of our four cities to lead the city councils.



**The UDF will:**

- Re-orient the focus of decentralization reforms to include not just technocratic reforms but also accountability and empowerment of Malawians.
- Reform the system of local governance to empower local communities and ensure that local elections are held routinely and on time. This will enable the transfer of power to communities with strong democratic and accountable local level governance structures. We recognize that ordinary Malawians ambitions are thwarted by authoritarian micro-management, corruption and centralization of our central government structures.
- Establish a framework for even and equitable development of all the regions of the country. Decentralize the implementation of grass-root development programmes such as **MASAF** and **OVOP** to Regional Administrators.
- Focus on getting the basics right: staffing and capacity of assemblies to ensure that the right staff are recruited to do their job, shared sector devolution strategy, rationalize sub-district participatory structures, develop community capacities and devolve responsibilities.
- Strengthen open and competitive local level procurement processes to foster PPP's. Support creation of PPP environment.
- Develop a framework of engagement between local assemblies and private sector as partners in service delivery.
- Strengthen the inter-governmental fiscal transfer mechanism, including the role of the National Local Government Finance Committee in overseeing local government finances and resolve chronic problems.
- Strengthen local government supervision capabilities (especially of CBO's), to improve their effectiveness.
- Pursue political decentralization-encourage empowerment of councils and training of elected officials to deliver on their mandates effectively. Build functional and modern market places for vendors in all the three regions (Mzuzu, Blantyre and Lilongwe).



## MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF RESULTS



Malawi's poor track record of delivery has been partly due to its inability to infuse a culture of monitoring and evaluation of results across all strata of society. The systems to better review policy priorities, finance them and successfully track activities while focusing on achieving planned outcomes. The monitoring and evaluation of results will provide the necessary evidence to better allocate resources based on demonstrable success and reducing wastage, a core element of our focus on deriving more value from every Kwacha spent.

The UDF will:

- Develop a government-wide monitoring and evaluation of results strategy (championed by the President and Cabinet).
- Build the demand for data by civil servants across government, along with empowering the National Statistical Office to generate more valuable data to support the evaluation of success.
- Strengthen district and community level monitoring frameworks and shift focus from inputs to outputs and outcomes.
- Publish monitoring and evaluation of results reports that show progress across each and every strata of government and develop mechanisms to empower citizens to hold government to account for areas where results are poor.
- Strengthen the capacity of Ministry of Information and Civic Education to disseminate
- information on results through government mediums.



Malawi's accountability institutions are weak. Most Malawians feel powerless. They lack political influence, and feel that they do not have a voice that will be heard. Key institutions meant to bring the necessary checks and balances on the executive, such as Parliament, the courts, the media, political parties, civil society etc. are not empowered to do their job, nor does the public demand these institutions to address these checks and balances. Further there is little engagement among these entities and are themselves undermined by corruption and violence.

UDF will:

- Set up mechanisms & structures that provide all Malawians a voice that will be heard, with the right to receive information and explanation for actions and we will enforce sanctions if the response is necessary
- Develop a roadmap to Constitutional Review and ensure that process is impartial and completed within agreed timelines.
- Nurture a free and effective media to transmit messages and information to and from ordinary Malawians with Government and to hold government to account. This includes providing a regulatory environment for media that is free of political control.





- Recognize the role of active civil society and encourage its focus on key issues of concern to Malawians including environment, personal security, women's rights, and youth empowerment.
- Institute quarterly dialogue forums between Government and civil society to discuss issues of national importance.
- Strengthen the representation of women, especially in political leadership positions across key accountability institutions.
- Strengthen the role and autonomy of Parliament, in approving legislation, controlling the budget process and influencing policy making. By encouraging greater participation, requiring ministers to answer to questions honestly and efficiently and ensure that its decisions are implemented.
- Enhance transparency of information on resource flows to citizens on budgetary transfers to key service delivery units, outline obligations and commitments of government and what citizens should expect and actual performance of front-line service delivery units.
- Encourage CSO's to undertake independent budget analysis, make the budget more transparent, and deploy citizen's charters. Roll out citizen report and community score cards to generate Malawians experience with public services and publicise the results to ensure any issues are addressed.
- Strengthen mass media development-ability to ask the right questions. Improve credibility of media (independence from private and political interests). Redress the issues of 'fake news' and provide better governance of social media to protect all Malawians.
- Strengthen the mandates and increase the budgets of the Anti-Corruption Bureau, Auditor General, Accountant Generals Offices, Parliament. Establish an independent, effective and highly specialised, anti-corruption unit to ensure that corrupt persons in both the public and private sector are held to account.
- Prohibit public servants and public representatives from doing business with the state.





Malawi's security and justice sector is fraught with a myriad of challenges which include: illegal immigration, drug and human trafficking and illegal cross border trade, slow and access to security services. There is severe over-crowding in prisons. The justice system suffers from chronic lack of state-funded representation. A majority of Malawians cannot afford a private lawyer with approximately 33 Legal Aid lawyers in the country. Access to information on basic legal rights is also patchy.

UDF will:

- Strengthen the criminal justice system, capacity of police, prosecutors, legal aid and courts.
- Establish a total of 100,000 community safety committees and forums across the country, along with financial and material support to community policing forums and neighbourhood watches.



## SECURITY AND JUSTICE

- Tackle incidents of domestic violence and abuse against women and children and undertake a multi-disciplinary approach to tackling violence against women and children.
- Strengthen border controls to improve security, manage immigration effectively and promote regional cooperation on border security.
- Strengthen the Malawi Police Force: recruit and train an efficient police service ensure that they are all equipped with vehicles and other equipment to perform their duties, remove service members who abuse their power/participate in corruption, strengthen cooperation between communities and police in preventing crime. Establish specialized crime units for Narcotics, Gangs, Sexual Offences and Rural Safety. Regularly monitor police stations compliance with Domestic Violence Act and establish a register/system for monitoring domestic violence.
- Make all courts free from political interference and properly resourced to handle all cases through the system.
- Develop an integrated system for crime statistics which highlights the number of reported crimes against arrests made, cases referred to the Director of Public Prosecution, number of prosecutions carried out and number of convictions sourced.
- Strengthen legal aid services, expand use of community courts and improve the efficiency of the court system. Reduce prison overcrowding by building additional facilities, improving management of remand prisoners and making better use of alternative sentences.
- Establish a strong independent Inspectorate of Correction Services to collaborate with civil society organizations to monitor conditions in prisons, prevent prisoner abuse, combat corruption in prisons and improve prospects for successful rehabilitation.
- Strengthen the national defence force to keep Malawi safe. Increase number of troops protecting our borders and clear guidelines in circumstances where the defence force maybe deployed to assist in public violence.
- Closely monitor defence procurement as transparently as possible and ensure it is not prone to corruption.
- Establish a regional stand-by brigade and greater intelligence collaboration through early regional warning centres.



Malawi's cabinet and its underpinnings have been shrouded in a culture of secrecy. Cabinet provides the single most important structure for providing direction and state and society. A credible Cabinet must set major policy priorities of government, make the difficult choices between competing priorities through its national budget and be accountable for the delivery of measurable results.

UDF will:

- Establish a strong Cabinet that champions policy priorities of government and holds itself accountable to the people.
- Include the best and brightest minds with proven records in their field, it will not be a Cabinet based on cronyism. It will include the best men and women in their field, irrespective of political affiliation.
- Empower Cabinet to collectively lead, providing oversight of the development and implementation of the annual budget.
- Build a culture of collective decision making and strengthen the dialogue between Ministers to deliver more comprehensive governance.
- Make cabinet accountable to the people by publishing cabinet decisions and communicating policy decisions.
- Streamline procedures for planning, execution and follow up of Cabinet meetings, including the preparation of an up to date and robust Cabinet Manual to direct and guide Cabinet Ministers and ministerial secretaries.





Malawi's approach to foreign policy has been ambiguous, fragmented, and lacks a coherent strategy. We need a foreign policy that supports our development implementation reliant on the intuition of the executive rather than directed by a motivated and trained diplomatic corps. Our foreign policy has been highly personalized based on the whims of those who are in power and has resulted in a tendency to look only at itself rather than project a planned and guided image to our neighbours, allies and partners.

Our national security has weakened because of a weakened relationship with our security forces. We believe we should once again show pride in our Malawi Defence Forces and rebuild mutual respect with the Malawi Police Service. The MDF has gained a hard-earned reputation as one of the most capable peacekeeping forces on the continent; that is demonstrated by the sacrifices paid by our forces in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Our MDF needs greater investment to improve their effectiveness, and better protect our servicemen and women when they are on operations, particularly as the risks grow in ever more challenging environments.

Our reputation as a peaceful, moderate democracy should not be misunderstood. Yes, we have a warm heart to our friends, but that heart is that of a lion and we will not tolerate any threats to our national security.

UDF will:

- Develop a long term objective and coherent foreign policy for Malawi that is grounded in economic priorities that serve our domestic agenda of inclusive growth and governance, while also increasing our international economic competitiveness.
- Increase our investment in technical analysis to take advantage of opportunities in international trading systems, bilateral relations and better attract foreign investors
- Use our positioning at multi-lateral forums such as United Nations, SADC, AU and other strategic forums to contribute to a safer world and further our national objectives.
- Contribute to the African agenda for industrialization and regional integration for sustainable and inclusive development. We will support the AU with the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA)
- Continue to contribute to peace keeping and humanitarian operations in various African countries and broaden our defence partnerships with allies to enhance specialist training and to better benefit from mutual integration.
- Groom a competent cadre of foreign policy technocrats. Set up an academic centre that will support the development of foreign policy, trade negotiations and diplomatic leaderships.
- Re-orient missions to ensure they deliver value for money and attract foreign investment and better promote Malawi as open for business.





- Promote cordial and friendly relations with all our neighbours in the spirit of good neighbourliness and peaceful coexistence, promoting intra-African trade and investment. Pursue sensible policies that will promote cooperation with our neighbours and enhance peace, security and development while protecting and maintaining territorial integrity and protecting lives and property of the Malawian people.
- Pursue constructive engagement and diplomacy in instances of conflict with state and non-state actors who share our understanding on the need to promote peace and security. Strengthen existing bilateral relations and forge new ones that offer opportunity to promote faster economic growth for Malawi
- Pursue deeper integration in regional bodies including SADC and COMESA and engage in more effective participation in international markets, positioning Malawi as a regional business hub and developing regional value chains.
- Continue to be involved in multi-lateral issues, particularly those that have a strong bearing on the interests of Malawi. Boost trade and business relations both regionally and globally and explore partnerships in emerging economies in Asia, Europe and the Americas. Uphold the fundamental human rights with regard to the values of the Malawian nation and not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion etc.
- Lead SADC's trade and investment agenda, seeking to enhance regional infrastructure connectivity, as well as promote peace and security cooperation
- Develop common positions on global issues, forming strategic alliances, diversifying international partnerships beyond traditional donors (emerging economies)
- Participate actively in multilateral organizations, and promote South-South cooperation





## CONCLUSION

The **Business First** Plan is not about slogans or temporary fixes. It is a clear, bold, and practical roadmap to move Malawi from donor dependency to a prosperous, self-reliant economy, fully aligned with our national vision of Malawi 2063 (MW2063).

Our manifesto demonstrates how the UDF will contribute to achieving MW2063's aspiration for "an inclusively wealthy and self-reliant industrialized upper-middle-income country by 2063." Through our comprehensive approach that addresses all three MW2063 Pillars (Agricultural Productivity and Commercialization, Industrialization, and Urbanization), we will accelerate progress toward the ten MW2063 aspirations.

We understand the struggles of ordinary Malawians. We have listened to your concerns about the lack of money, food, and access to basic services. We commit to ensuring that every decision we make puts people first. We believe that development is a long process and there are no quick fixes. We therefore commit to continuing the transformative initiatives that have the potential to uplift the lives of Malawians.

Trade, investment, innovation, domestic wealth generation, and the private sector will be the pillars of our new future. Aid may have helped us survive before, but it will not help us thrive tomorrow. We must stand on our own feet, and we can, in alignment with our national development agenda.

A thriving economy is the foundation for better health, education, jobs, and dignity for all Malawians. Together, we will build a Malawi that the world trades with, invests in, and respects - a Malawi that wins.

We ask for your trust in this vision. Together, we will transform our beloved nation into the prosperous democracy envisioned in MW2063 - an inclusively wealthy and self-reliant industrialized upper-middle-income country.

Vote UDF. Vote Business First. Vote for Prosperity. Join the Movement.



**A NEW  
BEGINNING**





# REAL CHANGE FOR **MALAWI**



