

DISABILITY MALAWI

Newsletter

First Edition | Volume 1 | December 2023



Brot
für die Welt

*“Promoting and safeguarding rights
of persons with disabilities”*





Dear Subscriber,

Welcome to '**THE DISABILITY MALAWI**' Newsletter. This is the first edition volume one fully packed with stories of updates that have been growing in Malawi's disability sector.

The just ended year, 2023, has been a mixed bag as far as the welfare and rights of persons with disabilities in Malawi is concerned. We have witnessed a tragedy in the year's first quarter as the country was heavily hit by Tropical Cyclone Freddy that left thousands of Malawians destitute as we lost our beloved ones. Official Statistics indicate that out of the affected people, 234, 724 were persons with disabilities and out of these persons, 47,424 were effectively displaced. This indicates that persons with disabilities are most vulnerable in situations of emergency as they are disproportionately affected negatively with acute circumstances that affect their human livelihood and socioeconomic condition. However, all was not calamitous and shady as 2023 has also provided some positive developments that may be dubbed milestones in the country's disability rights landscape.

The year had some positive strides registered in the advancement of disability rights. Without pre-empting the content of stories packaged in this edition, positive notes are highlighted in such news articles. Towards the end of 2023 for example, Malawians with disabilities have witnessed the passing of the much awaited Persons with Disabilities Bill and awaits the presidential assent to effectively make it into law; and once gazetted, we shall have a new piece of disability legislation (Persons with Disabilities Act) that will enhance the promotion and protect of rights of persons with disabilities in the country. We, from the disability sector, are eyeing progressive initiatives to ensure the meaningful popularisation of the new disability law.

THE DISABILITY MALAWI Newsletter gives a platform to let Malawians read for themselves what is there in the disability sector. In the year 2024, FEDOMA pledges that it will work around the clock ensuring people are updated through news letters that will be published periodically capturing critical and specific disability rights issues affecting this vulnerable population. The publication will follow principles of media ethics. For any questions and clarifications, do not hesitate to call us on +265 888 884 268 or +265 999 935 856, email: lyson@fedoma.net , www.fedoma.net

Enjoy your subscription and **THE DISABILITY MALAWI Newsletter** wishes all its valued subscribers a prosperous 2024.

May God Bless.

LYSON MAPANGA

Communications Specialist & Projects Coordinator



Welcome colleagues and friends to this new edition of **DISABILITY MALAWI Newsletter**. We at Federation of Disability Organization in Malawi (FEDOMA) would like to begin by wishing you all and happy and prosperous 2024.

The year 2023 saw us registering some notable achievements and the first one being, the passing of the Persons with Disabilities Bill by members of the Malawi Parliament. It is an achievement to us because we had lobbied for a long time to have the bill tabled in parliament. This new legislation once accented to and gazetted, will help enhance equalization of opportunities among persons with disabilities in the country and repeal the Handicapped Act of 1972 which had shortfalls as regards to addressing rights of persons with disabilities effectively.

In addition, Malawi also ratified the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa whose aim is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human and people's rights by all persons with disabilities, and to ensure respect for their inherent dignity. This is evidently a step ahead in our quest to see an inclusive society where persons with disabilities can ably actualize their dreams and potentials.

Furthermore, in 2023 FEDOMA led the disability movement in Malawi in submitting three alternative reports to relevant treaty bodies at the UN. Two of these treaty bodies are the UN committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and the CEDAW committee. As a result of the review processes, the relevant committees came up with concluding observations for Malawi. It is our expectation that these recommendations will be taken seriously by the Government of Malawi as a state party and that the different stakeholders will follow suit.

Going forward, we want to popularize the country's new disability laws and make sure that they are followed by duty bearers and all Malawians so that, they become relevant to persons with disabilities. The new laws will only become relevant and helpful if they are adhered to at national as well as district level. And as stipulated by the African Disability Protocol, Malawi as a state party is under obligation to among other things, take measures to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability by any person, organization or private enterprise.

In extension, we also want to enhance our capacity especially on resource mobilization to make sure that our plans as FEDOMA and affiliates are achieved. We have followed with keen interest all suggestion from members of different OPDs and it appears we all agree that there is need for more support towards our activities and we, believe this is achievable. As such, apart from partners who are supporting us through different projects, we would also want to engage members of the country's private sector to be part and parcel of our success, as they are another important stakeholder.

I urge you to be with us and support us as we continue lobbying and advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities.



SIMON WACHIMWAI MUNDE

Executive Director

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NEVER GIVE UP ALLUMINIUM PRODUCTS

Timagulitsa katundu wopangidwa pa manja wochokera ku aluminium monga mapoto, ma iron, masupuni, zosolera Chimanga ndi zina zambiri. Zonsezi zopangidawa ndi munthu wa ulumali wokhudza kuona. Tipezeni ku **NEVER GIVE UP ALLUMINIUM PRODUCTS** ku Chilomoni mu mzinda wa Blantyre

Phone: +265 (0) 8883 54350, CHIFUNDO NKOLOKOSA

HISTORY HAS BEEN WRITTEN AS FEDOMA ED TOOK OATH AS COMMISSIONER



Photo: Simon Munde taking oath of office

In just few weeks after Simon Munde, Executive Director for Federation of Disability Organizations in Malawi (FEDOMA), had been appointed as commissioner of National peace & Unity, 18 December, was another historical moment in disability fraternity as Munde joined rest of the newly appointed commissioners to take oath of office marking the beginning of a long way of enhancing the promotion of peace and unity in the country

Swearing in of Munde, a person with disability, signifies the commitment the country has in championing inclusion of persons with disabilities in public space and this development has come in just a week after he emerged the winner of Inclusive Human Rights Defender of the year as Malawi joins

the rest of the world in commemorating Human Rights Day in December. Speaking during the swearing in ceremony that took place at Kamuzu Palace in Lilongwe, President Lazarus Chakwera challenged commissioners to be the champions of peace and unity in the country.

"We want peace to continue prevailing in this country and it is our hope that you will help enhancing the promotion of peace and unity", he narrated.

On 2 December, 2023 President Chakwera appointed 8 Commissioners and 3 ex-officials and they have been sworn in the first ever cohort of National Peace & Unity Commission that will oversee the promotion of Peace and Unity in the country.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN BLANTYRE CELEBRATE CHRISMAS IN STYLE



Photo: Some of the people who participated

The disability sector continues basking in the glory as The Citizens Foundation in conjunction with the K Motors organised Christmas Lunch-on for persons with disabilities around Blantyre. Speaking at the Lunch-on held at Robins Park on December 23, Rodwell Lumbe from The Citizen Foundation said it is their wish to bring humanitarian support to the needy.

"We started organising events like this one last year and this year, we thought it wise to reach out to persons with various types of disabilities here in Blantyre. We are very grateful to dine with you here and this gesture signifies the love we have towards persons with disabilities", he said. He

added, it dawn on them to mobilize persons with disabilities to celebrate Christmas in a special way as persons with disabilities lack opportunities to come together and share joy.

Speaking briefly on behalf of persons with disabilities, Juliana Mwase, a renowned disability activist commended The Citizen Foundation and K Motors for the continued support towards the marginalized groups but she was quick to ask organisers to continue doing the commended job towards persons with disabilities

"What you have done today will go along way in the history of this nation but you should not stop here rather continue helping the needy with your humanitarian support", said Mwase.

Various youths with disabilities performed a number of activities to spice up the event as part of displaying their joy.

K Motors and The Citizen Foundation provided buses to ferry persons with disabilities to their designated locations and about 800 persons with disabilities came to patronise the event.



MALAWI PARLIAMENT HAS PASSED PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES BILL



Photo: Malawi Parliament

Malawi Parliament has passed the much awaited Persons with Disabilities Bill into law. Speaking after the passing of the bill, Minister of Gender, Community Development, and Social Welfare, Jean Muonaouza Sendeza said the new legislation will enhance equalization of opportunities among persons with disabilities in the country.

Persons with disabilities have been facing numerous challenges like failing to access social amenities. In this case, social services like inclusive health services will be improved", she said. She added that the bill has repealed the old Persons Handicapped Act of 1972 which had no relevant matters

to address disability rights effectively.. Speaking on behalf of opposition, Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) Ben Phiri said bringing the bill to the parliament signifies total willingness the country has in bringing equal opportunities towards Persons with disabilities, the passing of this bill brings an opportunity to align ourselves to accommodate our colleagues (persons with disabilities).

We need to align ourselves to the international standards as we are living in a global village and we need to move away from old way of doing our things so let us take away the old Handicapped Act", he lamented" In his remarks, Member of Parliament for

Nkhotakota North-East, Overstone Kondowe said the old Handicapped Act did not recognise other disability types like albinism, epilepsy, intellectual and psychosocial disability hence the need to repeal it.

Once the president assents to the bill and gazetted into law, the disability sector will have new Persons with Disabilities Act.



Photo: Harrison Elisa taking oath of office

Positive developments continue to take cause as another positive stride has been witnessed as Lilongwe District Council has appointed a person with albinism to lead the council's Appointment & Disciplinary Committee as secretary

Recently, the Malawi disability fraternity has witnessed Harrison Elisa taking oath before taking his charges as the secretary of the committee. This comes just few days after Malawi has ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on Human Rights and people's Rights on the rights of persons with disabilities popularly known as African Disability Protocol (ADP) whose rationale is to ensure observance of rights of

persons with disabilities in the continent.

This comes at a time as parliament has also passed the Persons with Disabilities Bill that seeks to enhance protection and promotion of rights of persons with disabilities in the country.

Appointment & Disciplinary Committee is a paramount committee at the district level whose role is to oversee matters of employment and promotions.

MALAWI GOVERNMENT RATIFIES AFRICAN DISABILITY PROTOCOL



Photo: Honorable Nancy Tembo
Minister of Foreign Affairs

In just a day after parliament passed the much-awaited Persons with Disabilities Bill, the Malawi Government has ratified the other much awaited African Disability Protocol (ADP). In a statement released on 6 December by Ministry of Foreign Affairs signed by the minister responsible, Nancy Tembo,

states ' the ratification has been made without reservations. It is the wish of the Government of Malawi to ratify the said protocol. Now, Therefore I, Nancy Tembo, M.P. Minister of Foreign Affairs for and on behalf of Malawi, declares that the Government of Malawi, having Considered the above protocol, I ratify the same and undertakes faithful to perform contained', reads the statement in part. It further reads, ' I witness Therefore, I have signed this instrument of ratification at Lilongwe on this 6th day of December, 2023'. According to Joseph Chiona, President of University of Malawi (UNIMA) Disability Rights Clinic, who spoke during the symposium organized by Federation of Disability Organizations in

Malawi (FEDOMA) on 3 December 2023 in Zomba as part of commemoration of International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD0, he stressed the need by the Malawi Government to expedite the ratifications of ADP saying this will help the promotion and protection of rights of persons with disabilities in the country.

The protocol to the African Charter on Human and people's Rights on Heads of States during the 30th Ordinary Session of the African Union (AU) which was held in Addis Ababa Ethiopia on 29th January 2018 adopted African Disability Protocol.

FEDOMA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EMERGING THE WINNER IN INCLUSIVE RIGHTS DEFENDER



Photo: Simon Munde
FEDOMA Executive Director

Simon Munde, Executive Director for Federation of Disability Organizations in Malawi {FEDOMA} has won the Inclusive Human Rights Defender of the year 2023 in a special way for advancing rights of persons with disabilities in the country.

The award is an honor to a winner as an awardee in the category of emerging Human Rights Defender of the year-child rights.

The award comes at a time when Malawi joins the rest of the world in commemorating International Human Rights Day that was set aside in 75 years ago. This year's main event marking the commemorations, took place on 11th December at Chigumukire School Ground-Chileka in Blantyre.

FEDOMA ENGAGES MOTHER GROUPS IN DISABILITY MAINSTREAMING



Group photo

In a bid to promote Gender and Disability mainstreaming in discission making fora, FEDOMA has challenged mother groups in Ntcheu, Balaka and Zomba to promote disability inclusion.

Speaking at one of the engagement meetings held in Zomba, Ethel Kachala, FEDOMA Project Manager, emphasized the need to effect inclusion of women in discission making process if the country is to achieve its vision 2063 development agenda

FEDOMA is implementing gender and disability mainstreaming in Zomba, Balaka and Ntcheu Districts with an aim to promote full participation of women and girls with disabilities in discission making. The project is made possible with financial support from Bread for the World.

"Women are crucial in development and lets incorporate them in whatever we are doing; and by doing that, we are fostering their meaningful participation in development agenda as we are living in an inclusive society where we ought not to leave no one behind" , she narrated.

She therefore challenged mother groups to spearhead inclusion of women with disabilities in all development circles and she encouraged them to be champions influencing discission makers to embrace disability mainstreaming at all times.

During the engagement meetings, mother groups in the districts drew work plans as their instruments to effect disability inclusion.



Photo: Kalebe Masau

Some persons with disabilities in Machinga and Dedza have all reasons to smile as FEDOMA in partnership with Sightsavers International have trained them in the production of various products.

The exercise was meant to equip persons with disabilities with skills that can make them boost their business.

Speaking during the training that took place at Dedza Residential Training Center (RTC), Catherine Bunya, Dedza District Disability Forum (DDF) chairperson, urged trainees to use the skills they have acquired to start unique business that will improve their lives economically.

"I would like to commend FEDOMA and sightsavers for recognising entrepreneurs with disabilities in Dedza to equip them with these skills and this a plus to us. I therefore urge my colleagues let us put into practice what we

have learnt here when we go back to our homes", she siad. Bunya further made an appeal to FEDOMA to think of expanding the project to other districts.

Taking his turn, Eston Nason, a person with physical disability from GVH Fosa in the area of Traditional Authority T/A Kachere in the district expressed gratitude saying this training will sustain their livelihoods.

FEDOMA and Sightsavers have trained a total of 80 entrepreneurs with disabilities in both Dedza and Machinga in an Economic Empowerment Project (EEP)

Participants have gone home with skills of producing soap, boom, petroleum jelly, milk, bread, fruit juices and shampoo.

MALAWI SUBMITTED THE RATIFIED AFRICAN DISABILITY PROTOCOL TO AFRICAN UNION



The Malawi Government has finally submitted the ratification instrument to the protocol to the African Charter on Human People's Rights on Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa with African Union (AU).

unique problems and challenges encountered by persons with disabilities.

The protocol popularly known as African Disability Protocol (ADP), its primary objective is to promote, safeguard and ensure equal exercise of all Human people's rights for persons with disabilities in Africa as well as ensuring respect of their inherent dignity

The instrument was adopted by AU Heads of States during their 30th ordinary summit on January 29, 2018 and President Lazarus Chakwera signed for the protocol on behalf of Malawi Government on the margins of AU Summit in Addis Ababa-Ethiopia on February 6, 2022 and ratified on December 6, 2023 by Minister of Foreign Affairs Nancy Tembo in Lilongwe.

Photo: Diana Nkomba Jere and William Bambi,

The final ratified instrument was officially presented to the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa-Ethiopia by Diana Nkomba Jere and William Bambi, first Secretary (Political)

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MR. & MISS ALBINISM AWAILED



Photo: Smart Vinti and Patricia Lionde

The Association of Persons with Albinism in Malawi (APAM) has crowned Smart Vinti and Patricia Lionde as 2024 Mr. and Miss. Albinism respectively; in the first time in the history of disability Malawi.

Vinti has been crowned Mr. Malawi after edging his seven counterparts and Lionde has been named Miss. Albinism after biting 7 rivals with albinism in a tight contest held on 9 December at Golden Peacock Hotel in Lilongwe.

Speaking at the colorful event, Mary Chilima, spouse to the country's Vice President who came as guest of honor, said time has come when Malawi should start recognizing persons with albinism just like any other people who can render meaningful contribution to the national development agenda. "We should perceive persons with

albinism as any other individuals who can help develop our country in achieving its goals. I, personally, do support these people and it is our mandate to support them with necessary and reasonable resources that can keep them pursuing their livelihood', she lamented.

The two have emerged Mr. & Miss. Albinism at an event held just a day after Malawi had joined the rest of the world in commemorating the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD).



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The disability sector has seen many positive developments. Our camera men and women have some news in captions to share



President Lazarus Chakwera shakes hands with a young lady with disability at Kamuzu Palace during the inauguration of MACOHA Flag week.



Persons with disabilities trained on manufacturing of soap, petroleum jelly, shampoo, bread and fruit juices in Dedza



Honorable Jean Sendeza, Minister of Gender, Community Development, and Social Welfare delivering press statement during the launch of National Disability Awareness Month on November 3 2023 at Capital hill in Lilongwe.





Solidarity match on December 8 2023 at Chisitu Primary School ground during the commemoration of /international Day of Persons with Disabilities.



Self-help, a person with physical disability selling Newspapers at Game complex in Lilongwe. Enhancing his economic empowerment initiatives



Share out what you have; it shall be given to you Catherine Bunya, Chairperson for Dedza District Disability Forum at Dedza Prison



Part of Malawi's delegation to the 86th session of the United Nations Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), held in October, 2023 in Geneva Switzerland. The delegation was from Disabled Women in Africa (DIWA), Disabled Women in Development (DIWODE) and FEDOMA with financial support from Women Enabled International (WEI) and Disability Rights Fund (DRF).

FEDOMA - The Federation of Disability Organizations in Malawi (FEDOMA) is not a service provider rather we advocate and lobby for inclusive service delivery. The organization was established in 1999

VISION STATEMENT

FEDOMA strives for an inclusive barrier free society where every individual is able to maximize their fullest potential.

MISSION STATEMENT

FEDOMA is an umbrella of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) in Malawi which works to unify, coordinate efforts and strengthen the advocacy work of its affiliates for the well-being of persons with disabilities in Malawi.

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