

Statement by H.E. Mrs. Callista Jenni Mutharika, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative to UNEP, on Tropical Cyclone Freddy (TCF) on Malawi made at the Meeting of the Subcommittee of UNEP CPR on 23rd March 2023, under Agenda item 5: Other Matters

1. I thank you Madam Chair for this opportunity address distinguished colleagues.

2. My delegation has requested for the floor to provide information and update on the devastating impact on Malawi of Tropical Cyclone Freddy (TCF).

3. Tropical Cyclone Freddy (TCF) landed in Malawi on 12th March 2023, resulting in heavy rains, strong winds, flash floods and mudslides in thirteen districts of the Southern part of the country. As of today, 23rd March 2023, 507 people have died, 1332 people injured, 537 people are missing and 553, 614 people have been displaced. The internally displaced people (IDPs) are currently residing in 543 camp sites set up in the affected districts.

4. The natural disaster has cut off roads, washed away bridges and brought down electricity lines. The impact of the cyclone has made health facilities unusable, damaged and washed away thousands of crop land, washed away food reserves and disrupted learning in schools, due to suspension of classes. It has been

necessary to suspend classes for safety and also to accommodate school premises as some of the camp sites for the displaced.

5. The Government declared a State of Natural disaster, during which it appealed for support from all, including international stakeholders. The Government has also declared fourteen days of national mourning following the overwhelming impact of the cyclone. The Government has been providing emergency response and relief as well as search and rescue, assisted by citizens and local entities of goodwill as well as international partners.

6. As regards international support, my delegation would like to express profound gratitude to various Member States and International Organisations, who in the spirit of goodwill, friendly relations and South-South cooperation have responded positively and timely to Malawi's plight.

7. Allow me to mention our three neighbours of Mozambique, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia; also, Japan, Norway, South Africa, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Zimbabwe. In addition, the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the United Nations have also rendered a hand.

8. These countries and entities, have directly or through third parties provided finances, emergency relief items, air assets, search

and rescue services, personnel, water, sanitation and health services and medical resources.

9. But we also want to thank all countries and international organisations that have expressed sympathy and solidarity with the people of Malawi during this difficult time.

10. As I conclude, let me highlight three things. Firstly, while the emergency response and relief work continue – undertaken with determination by the Government and steadfast support from international partners – assistance, from all corners, in the form of shelter; protection; health; non-food items; water, sanitation and hygiene; and food security and nutrition, is still required for those in camps for the internally displaced people (IDPs).

11. Secondly, while humanitarian assistance is ongoing, there is need to also provide psycho-social support to those caught up in the fall and impact of the cyclone.

12. Thirdly, Malawi has the difficult task of managing the post-cyclone recovery period to rebuild not only the livelihoods of the affected but also to repair the damaged infrastructure such as schools, roads and bridges. In this task of post-cyclone recovery, therefore, Malawi appreciates the continued support from international partners.

13. The occurrence of these natural disasters is both a result of the impact of climate change, but also exacerbates biodiversity loss and pollution and waste. As such, unfortunate as it is, the occurrence of such disasters, is a stark reminder of the threatening reality of existing environmental crises.

14. Additionally, focus by Malawi on emergency response and post-disaster recovery, as is the case now, derails national efforts aimed at tackling the worrying environmental challenges and takes away the already constrained resources allocated to the same.

15. Let me once again thank you most sincerely Chair and Distinguished Delegations for this opportunity to address you on this unfortunate development in Malawi.

16. Thank you all for your kind attention