



Republic of Malawi

UNEP CPR Subcommittee meeting, 26th March 2024

Intervention on behalf of Malawi by Mapopa C. Kaunda, Deputy Permanent Representative (DPR) to UNEP on Agenda Item 2, Briefing on the implementation of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

1. Excellency Chair, colleagues, good afternoon.
2. From the outset, let me thank the Secretariat for the briefing provided on UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.
3. Mr. Chair allow me to share some information that basically speaks to commitments by Malawi and action on the ground. I seek your indulgence for what might be a long statement.
4. With current unpredictable shifts in climate and increased increase in climate disasters, Malawi faces many challenges due to landscape degradation, and solutions to these challenges require immediate attention. Agricultural, economic, and ecological productivity have decreased in the past 20 years.
5. In 2016, Malawi pledged to restore 4.5 million hectares of degraded forests and land by 2030 as part of the AFR 100 initiative and

the Bonn Challenge. The realisation of this target is expected to also contribute to the targets for the UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration.

6. Having indicated that there are nearly 7.7 million hectares of degraded forests and land across the country, the National Forest Landscape Restoration Opportunities Assessment of 2017 enabled Malawi to formulate a national strategy to address the social, economic, and biophysical realities of land degradation and deforestation, and in a way that is gender responsive. By implementing restoration activities at scale, Malawi will mitigate the underlying conditions of soil erosion and nutrient depletion and enhance the opportunity for obtaining greater output from degraded lands and forests.

7. The National Forest Landscape Restoration Strategy presents us with an opportunity to tackle key obstacles to our national development, all of which are compounded by the impacts of climate change: food insecurity and poverty, insufficient energy supply, and water shortages. In the last 10 years, Land degradation has decreased food security, reduced availability of water for consumption and for irrigation, decreased our hydroelectricity production, and increased vulnerability of affected areas and their populations to climate change across the country.

8. The National Forest Landscape Restoration Strategy, developed within this guidance, forms the inception point for action to address land degradation and deforestation while outlining near-term, medium-term, and long-term strategies to translate the potential of restoration into better, more prosperous lives for the citizens of Malawi. These strategies include policy recommendations; spatial and cost-benefit assessments that identify where restoration interventions will have the

highest positive impacts to reduce degradation and support increased food security, resilience, and biodiversity; scalable techniques and intervention types that can be employed at large scale to support landscape restoration; and the development of economic incentives and funding mechanisms that perpetuate large-scale restoration.

9. An important goal of forest landscape restoration is to create conditions, at scale, that incentivize and reward the sustainable use of natural resources. Malawi should restore landscapes to improve food security, increase resilience from disasters and diseases made worse by climate change, and support the biodiversity and ecological functions that underpin agricultural productivity, economic growth, and social well-being. Therefore, broad engagement of the public sector, private sector, traditional authorities, and other local community organizations will be required to successfully restore Malawi.

10. In 2022, Malawi applied the IUCN Restoration Barometer to assess progress towards the 2030 goal and it was noted that at least 1.8million hectares had been put under restoration since 2017 through various government and partner initiatives. However, it was realised that there were overlaps of projects and this necessitated a national scale stocktaking exercise of all restoration projects with support from the World Bank and IUCN. The results of the stocktake will contribute to the update of the 2017 degradation mapping as Malawi accelerates restoration efforts.

11. The following are several main priorities for Malawi in as far as restoration is concerned, including on coordination, technical capacity, and knowledge management and monitoring and evaluation and development of large-scale project:

On Coordination

- i. To avoid overlaps and duplication of efforts by stakeholders financing and implementing restoration initiatives
- ii. To enhance efficiency, transparency, accountability, professionalism and build confidence among communities where restoration is taking place.
- iii. To strengthen cross-sectoral linkages and enhance policy coordination. A national multisectoral platform has been established and needs funding for regular interaction.

On Technical Capacity

- i. Filling of crucial vacancies in relevant government departments
- ii. Farmer trainings and demonstrations
- iii. Promotion of green value chains for livelihood improvement
- iv. Improved local natural resources governance

On Knowledge management and M&E

- i. Maintenance of geo-referenced data for robust monitoring
- ii. Dissemination of information on best practices
- iii. Establishment of scaling up mechanisms including community incentives.

Development of large-scale projects with funding from the national budget and development partners.

- i. Currently, the World Bank, USAID, UNDP and the German Government are supporting ongoing large scale restoration projects. However, there are more potential areas for investment.

I thank you for your kind attention.