

SAVE THE DATE



The Republic of Malawi In collaboration with UN Women

Cordially invites you to a side event during the 63rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women on:

EMPOWERING RURAL WOMEN AND GIRLS: ACCESS TO EDUCATION, HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Date: 12 March 2019

Time: 10:00AM to 11:15AM

Venue: Conference Room D

Malawi is a Least Developed Country (LDC) with about 17.5 million people, 51% of which are females, according to the 2018 Population and Housing Census. On the other hand, children aged 18 years and below account for about 51% of the population, with the majority being girls. According to the World Bank, 51.5 % of the population in Malawi live below the national poverty line. In respect of the international poverty line (people living below US\$1.90 per day), about 71.4% of Malawians live in poverty. Ultra-poverty rate in the country, according to the Fourth Integrated Household Survey (IHS4) Report, decreased by about 4% to 20.1% between 2010 and 2016.

Women and girls, being the majority of the country's population - coupled with low literacy levels, low formal skills (Population & Housing Census, 2018) and disadvantageous gender roles – are the ones that mostly bear the burden of poverty

in the country. The Government of the Republic of Malawi, in its medium-term development plan - the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy Three (MGDS III) – has positioned social protection as one of the critical tools for building household and community resilience and addressing chronic and transient poverty.

Social protection in the country is provided through five main instruments, key of which is the Malawi Social Cash Transfer Program (SCTP) locally known as Mtukula Pakhomo, which targets the bottom 10% of ultra-poor and labour constrained households. Mtukula Pakhomo has about 280,000 household beneficiaries, 70% of which are female headed households. It accounts for about 1.2 million individual members, 56% of which are children aged 18 years and below, 55% are girls.

Therefore, Mtukula Pakhomo has proven not only as a life line but also as an empowerment tool for rural women and girls, who are living in poverty. Through Mtukula Pakhomo, rural women beneficiaries have improved their financial status thereby making them less susceptible to abuse. The program has increased rural women's access to public services and has enabled girls to stay longer in school and reduced incidents of early pregnancies (study conducted by University of North Carolina, 2016). These outcomes have the potential to increase the future productivity and well-being of rural women and girls, thereby enabling them to have a voice in decision making processes.

By hosting this Side-event, the Government of Malawi intends to showcase how social protection instruments such as cash transfer can be used not only as tools for poverty reduction but also as tools for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls and how this enables rural women and girls to access public services. The side-event will be conducted through a video documentary of rural women in Mulanje District that are benefiting from Mtukula Pakhomo. The documentary will detail how the women are using cash benefits from the programme to economically empower themselves and improve their access to public services. It will also highlight the critical role played by the School Meals Program (SFP) in girls' education. Through the SFP, Government is providing nutritional support to primary school going children of which 51% of the beneficiaries of the program are girls. Furthermore, Government is constructing girls' friendly toilets and hostels; and providing education bursaries and sanitary support to girls. All these demonstrate the Government's efforts in ensuring girls retention in school and improving the literacy levels for women and girls. The Side-event will assert that social protection is key to attaining Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 10 and the African Union Agenda 2063. The documentary will be supported by a very short introduction and flyers.

Program:

- Welcoming Remarks: Ms. Erica Maganga, Secretary for Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare, Malawi
- Key note speech: Honourable Cecelia Chazama, M.P., Minister of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare, Malawi
- Documentary
- Panel Discussion

Panelists:

- Honourable Cecelia Chazama, M.P., Minister of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare, Malawi
- Member of parliament
- Dalitso Kalimba: Deputy Director in the Poverty reduction Division, Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development
- Gender expert
- Ida Deleza: Traditional Authority Chikumbu, Mulanje District
- Susan kondowe: COMSIP official

RSVP @ malawimissiontotheun@gmail.com