



THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

NATIONAL GENDER POLICY

2000 – 2005

***Ministry of Gender, Child Welfare And
Community Services***

MARCH 2000

FOREWORD

The government designed the Ministry of Gender, Child Welfare and Community Services as the National Gender Machinery for Malawi. It's main mandate is to spearhead the formulation, implementation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of Gender Policy, programmes, projects and activities at all levels.

The key role of the National Machinery is to mainstream gender. Gender mainstreaming means addressing gender concerns at all levels and in all sectors of development which are critical to the achievement of the goals of democracy, social justice, poverty eradication and sustainable development.

The overall goal of this policy, therefore, is to mainstream gender in the national development process to enhance participation of men and women, boys and girls for sustainable and equitable development for poverty eradication. This goal is in line with my government's national development policy of poverty eradication.

The Gender Policy was developed through a consultative process and the following organizations and individuals were consulted:

In 177 constituencies women, men, boys and girls, orphans, widows, widowers, local leaders and administrators of deceased estates in those areas.

15 districts including Village Development Committees, Area Development Committees, Principal Secretaries and Chief Executives.

These consultations identified several gender issues and concerns.

These are grouped into six thematic areas in the policy:

- Education and Training. Reproductive Health
- Food and Nutrition Security
- Natural Resources and Environment Management
- Government and Human Rights
- Poverty Eradication and Economic Empowerment

The National Gender Machinery will further provide technical back stopping services to all its stakeholders in gender. "Each individual stakeholder will be responsible for the implementation of the component of the policy which is relevant to its sector". In this connection therefore, each stakeholder will be responsible for the identification of a gender focal point in its organization. The Gender National Machinery will assist with the training of the focal points in gender analysis and mainstreaming.

Due to the cross cutting nature, information on the status of implementation will be shared through the Gender Policy implementation committee.

In order to realize the policy goals, gender must be mainstreamed in policies, staff development and delivery of programmes, projects and activities at all levels.

Currently the mainstreaming work has covered awareness creation and capacity building and mainstreaming in the on going programmes, projects and activities. The remaining work is mainstreaming gender in existing development policies, programmes and projects at the community, sectoral and national levels.

To date, the Ministry has spearheaded the formulation of gender networks, such as: NGO Gender Co-ordination Network, Civil Service Gender Network (not yet finalized); and the next will be the parastatal and private sector gender networks.

Malawi as nation has also formulated the United Nations/Government joint Gender Policy. This is a guide for donor support towards gender undertakings.

For an effective implementation of the gender policy, there is need to develop a gender programme, operationalise the implementation structure and framework. This therefore, calls for an immediate production of action plans, allocation to resource and ensuring that necessary structure is in place.

(Signed)

Dr Bakili Muluzi

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

1.0 **PREAMBLE**

- 1.1 The Government of Malawi recognizes that sustainable economic and social development of the country requires full and equal participation of women, men, girls and boys. This National Gender Policy, therefore, is to guide and direct at all levels the planning and implementation of development programmes, with a gender perspective including resource allocation for equitable national development objective of Poverty Eradication.
- 1.2 Since 1993, the Government of Malawi adopted Women in Development (WID) Strategy as a guide to addressing women's concerns and gender issues in the development process. Despite the WID efforts, gender imbalances still exist in all the sectors. These disparities are equally recognized by the 1995 Malawi Constitution, which enshrines gender equality in the national principles. The Situation Analysis of Poverty in Malawi (1993) estimated rural poverty at 60% and also indicated that women in rural areas are becoming poorer.
- 1.3 A critical analysis of the Malawi society shows that there are strong traditional and cultural forces that impinge on the participation of both men and women in development endeavors. Indications are that disparities exist between men and women in actual power sharing, participation and control over decision-making processes. These favour men and put women in subordinate positions.
- 1.4 In the Agriculture Sector, studies show that about 70% of full time farmers are women. In both matrilineal and patrilineal societies, most women do not take full control over the use and ownership of the land. At the same time, women's access to credit is still low at between 10% and 15% while that of men ranges between 45% to 55%. Even in a situation where a woman has accessed credit, the control over its use rests with the man. The Situation Analysis of Poverty and other studies indicate that extension and training services favour men, due to male dominance in the profession and cultural orientation.
- 1.5 The health status of the Malawian population is generally low, as indicated by high maternal mortality rate (620/100,000), high infant mortality rate (133/1,000) and low life expectancy at birth, which is at 44 years. While access to health facilities and family planning services is reasonably good, certain cultural practices and beliefs inhibit women's access to these health services. The Demographic and Health Survey (D.H.S)(1992), indicates that over one third of women enter the family formation pathway under the age of 20. This has serious implications on teenage abortions, problems related to early pregnancies and childbirth. The health situation of women is exacerbated by the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS, which currently is estimated at one million Malawians being HIV positive. This is out of the total population of 9.8 million as per the 1998 Housing and Population Census.
- 1.6 Adult female illiteracy is estimated at 71%, while that of men is 52%. Gross enrolment ratio between girls and boys at primary level is currently almost 1:1, but the dropout rate of girls is still high compared to boys, so that in the final year of primary school only 25% of the students are girls. At the same time the transition rate of girls into secondary and tertiary education is still low. A different picture emerges at secondary level where boys dropout more. An apparent lack of career guidance, particularly for girls, perpetuates their choice of women traditional professions. In addition curricula in the institutions have not been made fully gender sensitive.

- 1.7 The Malawi Constitution provides for the protection of the rights of both men and women. The social and cultural practices and misinterpretation of the democratic dispensation infringe on the rights of women. For example, violence against women in the public and work places has been on the increase. Inheritance on deceased estate does not favour women. This situation is worsened by limited capacity of the law enforcement machinery and limited knowledge amongst both women and men about their rights.
- 1.8 There is uneven gender distribution of the labour force in the formal and informal employment. The situation Analysis of Poverty in Malawi indicates that in 1985, women constituted 16% of the formal wage employment. The situation has not changed much over the years. The implication has been low representation of women in decision-making positions. For example, in July 1999 out of 193 Members of Parliament only 17 were female, four of 28 ministers were women, and there were only two female judges. The barriers for accessing to formal employment include; severe time and labour constraints due to child bearing, child care and household responsibilities, limited levels of education and technical training in comparison to males and societal and employer attitudes towards women.
- 1.9 In Malawi, women also face low nutritional status at household level as compared to men, despite the fact that, they are the main producers and processors of food. Cultural practices militate against women over control of cash income thereby contributing to household food insecurity. These practices also force women to deny themselves food in the right quantity and quality in favour of male adults and children. In most cases this seriously compromises their nutritional status.
- 1.10 Malawi has ratified a number of International Declarations and Conventions including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1987), the Earth Summit of Rio de Janeiro (1992), The International Conference on Nutrition (1992), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991), the Human Rights Conference in Vienna (1993), the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo (1994), the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen (1995), World Food Summit in Rome (1996) and the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995). The National Gender Policy takes cognizance of these UN Conventions and aims at harmonizing them with the national policies and laws.

The gender disparities as highlighted, limit women's participation in and benefiting from the development process despite government efforts of pursuing the WID strategy. Hence, the focus of this policy on gender as a development concept is to guide the participation of women and men, in economic, political, and social-cultural development.

2.0 THE NATIONAL GENDER POLICY

The National Gender Policy is developed as an integral part of the national development objectives to enhance the overall government strategy of growth through poverty eradication. Gender being a crosscutting issues, the policy is developed along six thematic areas embracing the governments priority development concerns. It specifically covers the priority gender issues that must be mainstreamed in development policies and programmes. This is to address the existing gender imbalances for gender equality, sustained and sustainable socio-economic development.

The policy development has been further guided by the gender equality related constitutional provisions and the global conferences and conventions where concrete strategies for action towards gender equity and equality have been spelled out and to which Malawi is a signatory. The themes covered under the policy are:

- Education and Training
- Reproductive Health
- Food and Nutrition Security
- Natural Resources and Environmental Management
- Governance and Human Rights
- Poverty Eradication and Economic Empowerment

2.1 THE NATIONAL GENDER MACHINERY

The National Gender Machinery which is the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Community Services is mandated to spearhead the formulation, implementation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the gender policy. Additionally, it is to oversee the mainstreaming of gender in all development policies, programmes, projects and activities. Further, it is to provide technical backstopping services to all its stakeholders in gender.

“EACH INDIVIDUAL STAKEHOLDER WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMPONENT OF THE POLICY WHICH IS RELEVANT TO ITS SECTOR”

In this connection, each stakeholder will be responsible for the Identification of a gender focal point in its organization. The Gender National Machinery will assist with the training of the focal points in gender analysis and mainstreaming.

Due to the cross cutting nature of gender, information on the status of implementation will be shared through the Gender Policy Implementation committee.

2.2 IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE FOR THE GENDER POLICY

The institutional structure for the Gender Policy comprises the following:

At the top is the main cabinet whose role is to approve and pass policies and acts. It will also give direction on Gender Policy and programme implementation.

Below it is the Cabinet Committee on Gender, Youth and Persons with Disabilities. Its role is to examine and review the Gender Policy, issues and legislations before they are presented to Cabinet and Parliament. It is also responsible for lobbying for the adoption of the gender policy, resolutions, and Acts.

Linked to the Cabinet Committee will be the two Parliamentary Committees, Parliamentary Women's Caucus and Parliamentary Committee on Women and Children Affairs. Their major role is to lobby and advocate for gender issues in Parliament.

Below the Cabinet Committee on Gender, Youth and Persons with Disabilities will be the Gender Advisory Committee (GAC) comprising all Principal Secretaries. Its main role is to advise Cabinet Committee on Gender, Youth and Persons with Disabilities on what each of the Sectoral Ministries is doing on gender and will also provide advisory services to the national Gender Machinery. Each Principal Secretary will be responsible to advise his/her line Minister on gender mainstreaming in their own organization.

Below the National Machinery will be the Gender Policy Implementation Committee (GPIC) which comprises all gender focal points in all sectoral Ministries, NGOs, parastatals and the private sector. The major roles of GPIC will be to identify priority gender issues, to plan for relevant interventions, assess and review progress in implementation of the policy.

To enhance implementation of the decentralization policy, the National Gender Policy, will use the existing institutions of District, Area and Village Assemblies. In addition, gender networks in NGOs, Civil Service and the Private Sector have been or are being established to share information and forge strategies for mainstreaming gender concerns in their respective development programmes.

3.0 GENDER POLICY GOALS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

3.1 POLICY GOAL

The overall goal of this policy is to mainstream gender in the national development process to enhance participation of women and men, girls and boys for sustainable and equitable development for poverty eradication.

3.2 GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- 3.2.1 To enhance and support national efforts towards poverty eradication through equal participation in and benefit from the national development process by women, men, girls and boys.
- 3.2.2 To provide all key actions in national development such as policy makers, the private sector, non-governmental organization (NGOs), and donors, reference guidelines for recognizing and addressing gender concerns, take informed development policy decisions, and ensure that gender perspectives are mainstreamed in all policies and programmes to benefit both men and women equitably.
- 3.2.3 To review and revise development policies, programmes and laws to make them gender responsive, so as to ensure, the participation of both women and men at all stages of the development process.
- 3.2.4 To promote and facilitate equal access to and control over productive resources, services and opportunities.
- 3.2.5 To redress imbalances that arise from existing gender inequalities including traditional, cultural and social attitudes that hinder equal participation of women and men in development and put women in subordinate positions.
- 3.2.6 To promote the recognition and value of women's multiple roles and responsibilities, their contribution towards national development and as beneficiaries of the development process.
- 3.2.7 To promote collection and use of gender desegregated data in planning and implementation of development programmes.
- 3.2.8 To clarify and establish an institutional framework with the mandate to initiate, co-ordinate, implement, monitor and evaluate gender responsive national plans and programmes.

3.3 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Underlying the general policy objectives are key guiding principles, which will guide policy development and implementation in all sectors as follows:-

- 3.3.1 The policy reaffirms government commitment of gender equality as enshrined in the national principles of the Malawi Constitution of 1995.
- 3.3.2 The gender policy is an integral part of the national efforts to eradicate poverty and sustain social and economic development. Therefore, all development efforts should ensure that gender concerns are routinely addressed in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes.
- 3.3.3 The policy seeks to harmonize national policies with the International and Regional Declarations and Conventions on the status of men and women, that Malawi has ratified.

4.0 MACRO-ECONOMIC POLICY ISSUES

- 4.1 The socio-economic setting within which the gender policy will be implemented is very weak. With an estimated GNP per capita of US\$230, Malawi ranks among the poorest 15 countries in the world. Poverty eradication is one of the central development objectives in Malawi. This is due to the fact that poverty is the main cause of the underdevelopment in the country. Gender imbalances existing in the Malawian society also tend to be reinforced by the existing poverty. According to the Situation Analysis of Poverty in Malawi, rural poverty, where the majority of people are, is estimated at 60% and urban poverty affect about 65%. A great proportion of those affected by poverty are women. The people affected by poverty have little access to productive resources such as land, credit, technology and information.
- 4.2 Since 1981 the Government has been implementing macro-economic reforms to restore the economy and foster growth. These economic recovery policies contradict the gender and development initiatives because they are gender neutral. As a result they have negative impact on vulnerable groups such as women, children, people with disabilities and the rural poor. To this end, the gender policy will advocate for review and adoption of macro-economic policies and development strategies that are gender sensitive.
- 4.3 The Government of Malawi is in the process of implementing a Decentralization Policy. This entails devolution of power from the centre to the local levels of government, with the local authorities exercising consideration autonomy in establishing and implementing local plans, setting priorities, controlling local resources for the provision of services and implementation of policies and programmes. Once this policy takes root, the local authorities and communities will be empowered to take decisions, plan and implement local programmes to address their needs and priorities. This process will enhance the implementation of the gender policy.

5.0 SPECIFIC POLICY OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR THE THEMATIC PRIORITY AREAS

Gender is a crosscutting issue and all aspects that affect sustainable and human centred development have a bearing on it. The Malawi Government, as areas has identified the key priority areas incorporated in this policy with critical gender concerns that need concentration of all development efforts for equal participation of men and women in the development process. The policy requires all development players in Malawi including Government Ministries and Agencies, NGO Community, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Civil

Society, Private Sector and Donors Community to mainstream gender in their programmes, develop sectoral action plans and mobilize resources to operationalise the National Gender Policy within their mandates.

5.1 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Constitution of Malawi enshrines education as a basic human right, furthermore, education as a basic human right is well elaborated in the Global Platform of Action and the Beijing Declaration, where it is stated that:

Education is a human right and an essential tool for achieving the goals of equality, development and peace. Non-discriminatory education benefits both girls and boys and this ultimately contributes to more equal relationships between women and men. Equality of access to and attainment of educational qualifications is necessary if more women are to become agents of change.

Literacy of women is an important key to improving health, nutrition and education in the family and to empowering women to participate in decision-making in society. Investing in formal and non-formal education and training for girls and women, with its exceptionally high social and economic return, has proved to be one of the best means of achieving sustainable development and economic growth...”

The government policy on education is concerned with equal accessibility and availability of education to girls and boys, women and men, expansion of enrolment, enhancing the quality of education, addressing internal efficiency regarding low retention and high dropout rates, and enabling non-formal education programmes for out of school youth and illiterate adults. Hence, in so far as it recognizes the gender issues, the policy focuses on the question of how to provide gender equality of opportunities in access to schooling. A wider and more important question, yet to be addressed by the policy is how education on gender issues can contribute to improving the status of women and men in Malawi. In this regard, the gender policy shall complement the public education policy to address the tradition of socialization of girls into subordination. This is the socialization process within the family, community, schools and other public institutions.

The ongoing efforts to be enhanced and consolidated by the National Gender Policy. Include Free Primary Education, Girls Attainment of Basic Literacy and Education (GABLE) programme, the change in policy to allow pregnant girls to go back to school, the initiatives to encourage girls and women to pursue science and technology courses, the revision of education curricula to make it more gender responsive, the inclusion of gender in refresher and training courses for teachers, and the role models initiative which highlights the careers of exemplary Malawian women.

The above efforts notwithstanding a lot more need to be done. These include changing societal attitudes towards the value of females and promoting their empowerment, improving the quality and relevance of education, increasing financial resources for education especially, scholarships to girls and needy boys, developing educational and skills training programmes for out of school youth and linking the adult education and literacy programme with the formal school system. This is to increase opportunities for women and men to develop life-skills. In the long run, Malawi should work towards Universal Primary Education so that all school going children have access to education.

Although access to education at different levels is improving due to the affirmative actions in place, it should however be noted that Mathematics and other Science subjects are still a

domain of boys. Girls still concentrate in stereotype fields of study such as nursing, teaching, secretarial training and home economics.

5.1.0 Gender Specific Objectives

5.1.1 To lobby for the provision of equal access and quality education to all school age children.

Strategies

5.1.1.1 Encourage increased enrolment and retention of girls and boys at all levels.

5.1.1.2 Advocate for increased classroom space to cater for the increased numbers of students.

5.1.1.3 Promote the provision of equal opportunities in educational institutions for girls and boys.

5.1.1.4 Encourage the procurement of more teaching and learning materials.

5.1.1.5 Encourage the training and recruitment of more teachers to handle the increased numbers of students.

5.1.1.6 Promote the reinforcement of the social mobilization campaigns to allow more girls and boys to enroll in school.

5.1.1.7 Encourage the bringing of schools closer to the communities.

5.1.1.8 Encourage the increased establishment of special education facilities in primary and tertiary institutions to cater for girls and boys who are physically challenged and have disabilities.

5.1.1.9 Advocate for Legislation for Compulsory Universal Primary Education.

5.1.2 To promote the reduction of dropout rates of girls and boys at all levels of education.

Strategies

5.1.2.1 Lobby for the legislation for and enforcement of non-employment of school age children.

5.1.2.2 Create awareness on the legal provision for the minimum age of marriage of 18 years according to the law.

5.1.2.3 Encourage increased retention of girls and boys at all levels.

5.1.2.4 Advocate for the reinforcement of the pregnancy policy at all levels to allow more girls who dropout to come back to school.

5.1.2.5 Encourage improved school achievements and motivate students to stay in school.

5.1.3 To encourage equal training and recruitment opportunities to female and male teachers in schools.

Strategies

5.1.3.1 Encourages the provision of facilities in teacher training institutions for equal enrolment of female and male students.

5.1.3.2 Lobby for equal creation of promotional posts at school level to lead transfer of teachers.

5.1.3.3 Advocate for equal opportunities for training and promoting women and men teachers for managerial positions at all levels.

5.1.4 To promote the use of gender responsive curriculum and educational materials at all levels.

Strategies

5.1.4.1 Encourage the continued mainstreaming of gender in all curricula.

5.1.4.2 Promote gender sensitization of all teachers.

5.1.4.3 Encourage the Strengthening of the Gender Appropriate Curriculum (GAC) Unit at the Malawi Institute of Education.

5.1.4.4 Encourage the training of education supervisors in gender analysis monitoring and evaluation.

5.1.4.5 Advocate for the introduction of gender courses in all training institutions.

5.1.5 To encourage full implementation of a gender responsive education policy.

Strategies

5.1.5.1 Advocate the setting up of gender focal points responsible for follow-up and monitoring of gender responsive education policies.

5.1.5.2 Sensitize policy makers on gender issues.

5.1.5.3 Encourage the dissemination of gender related education policies to the community at all levels.

5.1.6 To advocate for positive attitudes and behaviours among female and male teachers towards girls and boys education.

Strategies

5.1.6.1 Advocate for provision of counseling services including family planning to female and male students.

5.1.6.2 Advocate for research on existing teachers' attitudes and behaviours towards female and male students.

5.1.6.3 Sensitize students to report cases of sexual, verbal abuse and harassment.

5.1.6.4 Lobby for creation of an enabling environment in learning institutions for students to report sexual, verbal abuse and harassment.

5.1.7 To advocate for the increased enrolment in science and technology training.

5.1.7.1 Encourage girls and boys to study science subjects.

5.1.7.2 Encourage provision of career guidance talks in schools to encourage girls and boys to join non-traditional fields.

5.1.8 To encourage the provision of formal and non-formal education to both girls and boys who are dropouts and illiterate.

Strategies

5.1.8.1 Advocate for the strengthening of distance education services.

5.1.8.2 Lobby for the strengthening of the existing National Adult Literacy Programme.

5.1.8.3 Motivate literate people to teach on voluntary basis in their own communities.

5.1.8.4 Link the National Adult Literacy Programme to the formal education system.

- 5.1.8.5 Encourage the review of the education curricula to incorporate more life skills.
- 5.1.8.6 Promote the provision of equal opportunities for vocational and skills training to women and men, boys and girls.

- 5.1.9 To lobby for the elimination of all forms of harmful ritual and cultural practices that hinder girls and boys participation in education.

Strategies

- 5.1.9.1 Conduct a nation-wide social mobilization campaign.

5.2 REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

The government shall focus on Reproductive Health as one of the priority areas to improve the health status of women and men, girls and boys especially the disadvantage and vulnerable majority in rural and per-urban areas.

Reproductive health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being, and not merely the absence of disease. It implies therefore, that people have freedom to decide if, when and how often to produce. Women and men have a right to be informed and have access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods to regulate fertility. They also have a right of access to appropriate health care services that guarantee women's safe motherhood. However, the gender relations that exist between women and men, are characterized by the prevalence among women of poverty and economic dependence, violence, negative attitudes and discrimination against them in socio-economic and political spheres. These factors have adverse effects on their capacity as health care givers and on their lives. Cultural activities and customs which force girls into early marriages and early sexual experience, together with lack of information and services, increase the risk of unwanted and teenage pregnancies, unsafe abortions, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections. HIV/AIDS is a big challenge to Malawi society. It is now the leading cause of death in the most productive age group of 20 – 48 years. It accounts for over 40% of all in-patient admissions. Women are at a greater risk because of their disadvantaged and subordinate positions.

They are not empowered enough to make decisions about their sexuality. The HIV zero-prevalence rate among antenatal women in 1995 was estimated at over 30% in urban areas and between 12-14% elsewhere. The epidemic has left many children without parents and proper care. The traditional extended family support systems have also been eroded and as such they are very fragile and can no longer cope with the large numbers of orphans in society.

Government and NGOs are addressing the HIV/AIDS problem through awareness programmes on the epidemic and community-based approaches for orphan care. Preventive efforts to combat the disease are also focused on health education, family planning and changing people's sexual behaviour. However, such efforts need to be complimented by approaches that are community-based gender sensitive, targeting both women and men. Government has promoted community-based health delivery services. These initiatives have generally received considerable support from both government and NGOs, but despite this, they are far from being adequate for most Malawians. As a result the majority of both women and men walk long distances of between 5 to 20 km to reach an under-five clinic and health facilities. The time spent in walking would have been used for other productive activities.

Maternal mortality and morbidity is high due to several factors including inadequate access to information and essential maternal health services, poor nutritional status of girls and women, unsafe abortions, illiteracy, low status of women , cultural practices and poverty.

The high fertility rate of 6.7 is among the main factors underlying women's heavy burden of labour, and impoverishment. Child bearing and child rearing increase women's multiple burdens of labour and decreases the time available for productive work. Population increase is the main reason for the lack of per-capita growth in the national income and for the increasing pressure on land. The gender policy has a challenge to redress these reproductive health issues.

5.2.0 Gender Specific Objectives

5.2.1 To advocate for equal access to reproductive health and other health education programmes by women and men, girls and boys.

Strategies

5.2.1.1 Promote the creation of gender awareness among policy makers and health care providers at all levels.

5.2.1.2 Lobby for the creation of gender and youth friendly clinic and hospital environments.

5.2.1.3 Encourage the provision of improved access by female and male adolescents to friendly and confidential reproductive and general health services.

5.2.1.4 Encourage the integration of reproductive health in existing Primary Health Care Services and training of Village Health Committees and Community-Based Health Workers.

5.2.1.5 Encourage other health care providers to include reproductive health services.

5.2.2 To advocate for the development of specific integrated programmes on information, education and communication, counseling in family education and reproductive health for adolescents and youths.

Strategies

5.2.2.1 Encourage intensified information, education and communication (IEC) services on reproductive health at community level.

5.2.2.2 Promote IEC and counseling on adolescent health, fertility, HIV/AIDS, STD's and family planning.

5.2.2.3 Promote education for adolescents and youths for responsible parenthood.

5.2.3 To empower women and men to protect and care for themselves, particularly in relation to maternal and infant mortality, HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases.

Strategies

5.2.3.1 Promote IEC on human sexuality and reproductive health rights.

5.2.3.2 Encourage the availability and use of the female condom.

5.2.3.3 Encourage the training of women and men, girls and boys in negotiation skills.

5.2.4 To lobby for increased women's and men's participation in health management.

Strategies

5.2.4.1 Encourage the provision of equal management training and recruitment opportunities to both men and women for health managerial positions.

5.2.4.2 Promote gender responsive guidelines for selection of Village Health Committees and Community-Based Health Workers.

5.2.4.3 Sensitize communities to create gender awareness on sharing responsibilities.

5.2.5 To advocate for the reduction of high prevalence of unsafe abortions.

Strategies

5.2.5.1 Promote increased access to reproductive health services for the youth, men and women.

5.2.5.2 Advocate for the increased post-abortion care and counseling to the youth.

5.2.5.3 Advocate for the introduction of laws in the provision of safe abortion services for medically at risk mothers.

5.2.6 To lobby for the elimination of all forms of discriminatory and harmful sexual cultural practices.

Strategies

5.2.6.1 Encourage gender research to establish the magnitude of discriminatory and harmful health practices.

5.2.6.2 Promote social mobilization campaigns against discriminatory health practices.

5.3 FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

The policy shall focus on food and nutrition security to improve the nutritional status of the Malawian population particularly that of women and children to ensure good health, food security is a major concern at household level in both rural and urban areas, as well as at national level. Food security in its basic form can be explained as the ability by all the people to access in adequate amounts at all times for active and healthy life. At household level, this implies the ability to produce, purchase or acquire adequate amounts of food to meet biological requirements. Malawi faces acute and wide spread household food insecurity and the resultant malnutrition especially among women and children. The Malawi Food and Nutrition Security Policy addresses food insecurity in a multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional manner pulling together all issues and sectors relevant to the improvement of the food and nutrition security situation in the country.

The National Gender Policy shall focus on gender issues in agricultural production to redress the constraints women face. While women play a key role in smallholder agriculture by constituting over 60% of full time farmers and do nearly 70% of all the agricultural work and food production, their productivity is constrained by several factors. These include lack of access, control and ownership of productive resources such as land, credit, and improved technology and extension services. This is further exacerbated by gender insensitive agricultural policies.

Furthermore, the situation of women is an important concern, which pervades all the underlying factors. They affect the well being of families and especially children. Mother's knowledge of childcare, control of resources, time availability as well as her health status ultimately determines her ability to feed and care for the family. Therefore, the low productivity, labour-burdened, and cash strapped lives of women are directly linked to the household food insecurity. These are associated with high levels of malnutrition, morbidity and mortality especially among children. In addition socio-cultural attitudes and practices, economic empowerment of women, lack of economic opportunities and employment are integrally related to issues of food security and nutrition. The gender policy therefore, shall complement other related food security and nutrition policies to address a number of gender based inequalities to enhance household and national food and nutrition security for sustainable national development.

NUTRITION SECURITY

5.3.0 Specific Gender Objectives

5.3.1 To advocate for increased food and nutrient intake of women and children to reduce the major nutritional disorders prevalent in the country.

Strategies

5.3.1.1 Promote consumption of food rich in Iron, Oils, Folate, Vitamin A and proteins.

5.3.1.2 Advocate and encourage increased meal frequency.

5.3.1.3 Create awareness on importance and use of iodised salt.

5.3.1.4 Advocate and encourage crop and livestock diversification as a means of increasing the food base.

5.3.1.5 Promote improved monitoring and evaluations systems for nutrition.

5.3.2 To advocate for the elimination of food taboos and eating habits that negatively impact on the nutritional status of women and children.

Strategies

5.3.2.1 Promote gender responsive research to establish the extent of negative food taboos and habits which affect nutrition

5.3.2.2 Promote food and nutrition social mobilization campaigns

5.3.3 To encourage increased household consumption of non-staple foods.

Strategies

5.3.3.1 Advocate and encourage livestock diversification

5.3.3.2 Promote affordable labour and time saving technologies for improved household food preparation, processing and storage.

5.3.3.3 Promote nutrition campaigns on geographic area specific food commodities.

5.3.3.4 Promote research and development of specific indigenous traditional foods.

5.3.4 To advocate for the improvement of the nutritional status of women, men, girls and boys.

Strategies

5.3.4.1 Promote appropriate nutrition education programmes at all levels.

5.3.4.2 Promote the linkage of food and nutrition to economic empowerment, literacy, agriculture, health and environmental management and other related disciplines.

5.3.5 To encourage the introduction and development of time and labour saving technologies at each point of the food chain.

Strategies

5.3.5.1 Promote the development of technologies based on locally available raw materials.

5.3.5.2 Encourage the production and dissemination of the developed technologies.

5.3.6 To lobby for the capacity building for gender responsive food and nutrition experts.

Strategies

5.3.6.1 Advocate for gender responsive research in food and nutrition.

5.3.6.2 Lobby for the training of more nutritionists, food technologists, food scientists and dieticians.

5.3.7 To encourage the improvement of food quality and safety at storage, processing and sale points.

Strategies

5.3.7.1 Encourage the development and utilization of food and nutrition safety standards all levels.

5.3.7.2 Advocate for enforcement of quality and safety standards in foods.

5.3.7.3 Encourage the monitoring and evaluation mechanism for food and nutrition safety.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

5.3.8 To promote the development and implementation of gender responsive Agriculture Policies Strategies and actions.

Strategies

5.3.8.1 Advocate for gender analysis to identify key gender issues in the agriculture sector.

5.3.8.2 Encourage gender awareness sensitization and training at all levels.

5.3.8.3 Encourage the provision of skills for gender analysis of projects, programmes, policies and plans.

5.3.8.4 Lobby for Gender Mainstreaming in agricultural policies, programmes, projects, plans and activities.

5.3.9 To lobby for increased access to and control of land by women and men in both matrilineal and patrilineal systems.

Strategies

5.3.9.1 Lobby for the implementation of Land Reform Commission's Report pertaining to land ownership and inheritance.

5.3.9.2 To promote the conservation of the land resource.

5.3.9.3 Encourage agro-forestry for land conservation.

5.3.9.4 Encourage social mobilization campaigns on the effects of environmental degradation.

5.3.9.5 Promote proper utilization and conservation of the land resource.

5.3.10 To encourage increased access by women to agricultural extension services.

Strategies

5.3.10.1 Encourage continuous needs assessment in order to establish knowledge gaps between women and men to set up realistic extension targets.

5.3.10.2 Sensitise target population and existing male and female extension workers to undertake extension services for both women and men farmers.

5.3.10.3 Advocate for increased number of female extension workers.

5.3.11 To advocate for increased availability of, access to and control of credit by disadvantaged farmers particularly women.

5.3.11.1 Promote an enabling government policy to enhance the operation of more credit institutions.

5.3.11.2 Lobby for favourable credit conditions for disadvantaged farmers.

5.3.11.3 Advocate for increased campaign services to encourage women farmers to access credit.

5.3.11.4 Sensitise both women and men on their roles and responsibilities over credit and its benefit to the households.

5.3.11.5 Encourage the provision of more training opportunities to women and men in credit management.

5.3.11.6 Promote profitable agricultural enterprises among disadvantaged farmers.

5.3.11.7 Promote monitoring of access, use, management and control over credit by women and men.

5.3.12 To lobby for increased accessibility to processing and marketing of agricultural produce.

Strategies

5.3.12.1 Encourage the provision of marketing skills to women and men farmers.

5.3.12.2 Lobby for provision of crop finance for marketing purposes.

5.3.12.3 Encourage the provision of market information and infrastructures.

5.3.12.4 Advocate for improved communication infrastructures.

5.3.13 To advocate for the generation of appropriate and affordable gender sensitive technologies.

Strategies

- 5.3.13.1 Encourage the strengthening of farmer, research and extension services linkages to influence design of gender sensitive technologies.
- 5.3.13.2 Advocate for research, development and dissemination of gender responsive technologies.
- 5.3.14 To lobby for review of the curricula in agricultural training institutions to make it gender responsive.

Strategies

- 5.3.14.1 Advocate for gender mainstreaming in the agricultural curricula.
- 5.3.14.2 Encourage the introduction of gender and development courses in agricultural colleges.
- 5.3.14.3 Encourage the development of sector specific gender training manuals for different target groups.

5.4 NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

The gender policy shall promote the participation of women, men, girls and boys in the sound management, conservation and utilization of natural resources and the environment so as to achieve sustainable and equitable development.

Malawi is endowed with a diversity of natural resources that include fertile soils, forests, abundant water, diverse flora and fauna including the fish resource. If these natural resources are properly utilized, they would provide a basis for sustainable socio-economic development and contribute greatly to the eradication of poverty. Proper utilization of natural resources cannot be achieved without human centred development which not only calls for the conservation of natural resources but the actual access to use and management of such resources.

Malawi's natural resources and environment are being rapidly depleted and degraded due to the combined effects of rapid population growth, poor land management practices and poverty. Women are hardest hit by effects of environmental mismanagement because of the gender roles, which they play in resource utilization.

In rural areas, portable water is not readily available. Currently, only 56% of all Malawians have access to safe water. This is worrying because, 50% of all diseases are waterborne. It is also estimated that wood trees provide 93% of energy, most of which is used at the household level. As the supply of these resources becomes scarce due to deforestation, women suffer most, as they have to walk long distances to gather firewood and water.

Despite being the main victims of natural resources degradation, women remain largely absent at all levels of policy making, project formulation and management of natural resources and the environment.

5.4.0 Gender Specific Objectives

WATER RESOURCES AND SUPPLY

- 5.4.1 To lobby for the provision of safe, sufficient and portable water.

Strategies

- 5.4.1.1 Promote increased coverage of the population with access to potable water supply.
- 5.4.1.2 Empower both women and men to invest in the management of their own water resources and services.
- 5.4.1.3 Encourage the establishment of gender sensitive mechanisms that create beneficiary user committees.
- 5.4.2.1 To promote equal participation of women and men, girls and boys in the planning, designing and management of water projects.
- 5.4.2.2 Encourage mobilization campaigns to involve women, men, girls and boys in the planning, designing and management of water facilities.

FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

- 5.4.3 To encourage the participation of men and women girls and boys in forestry, wildlife and environmental management.

Strategies

- 5.4.3.1 Promote participatory forestry and wildlife management.
- 5.4.3.2 Encourage the provision of training in fuel wood, forestry and conservation.
- 5.4.3.3 Sensitise women, men, girls and boys on the importance of their participation in management and utilization of forest, wildlife and non-wood products.
- 5.4.3.4 To encourage the training of women, men, boys and girls in the management and sustainable utilization of Forests, Game Reserves and National Parks.
- 5.4.3.5 To lobby for the support of women and men in forest based subsistence and informal economies, including: growing, harvesting, processing and marketing of fuel wood, domestic, construction wood, industrial wood and other products.
- 5.4.3.6 Encourage the training of researchers and professional on gender analysts and planning within Forestry and Wildlife Sector.
- 5.4.4 To advocate for the provision of labour and energy saving technologies to reduce women's time and energy spent in fetching fuelwood.

Strategies

- 5.4.4.1 Encourage the dissemination of gender sensitive labour and energy saving technologies.
- 5.4.4.2 Promote the provision of technical skills to men and women to adopt and use simple energy saving technologies.
- 5.4.4.3 Promote use of appropriate alternative sources of energy.

FISHERIES

- 5.4.5 To encourage the participation of women in fish farming, processing and marketing.

Strategies

- 5.4.5.1 Encourage the mobilization of communities, particularly women to fish in both natural bodies of water and fishponds.
- 5.4.5.2 Promote the training of women in fishing techniques, processing and business management.
- 5.4.5.3 Encourage the dissemination of appropriate technologies for fish processing and storage.

5.4.5.4 Lobby for the introduction of credit schemes with favourable conditions for women involved in fishing, processing and marketing.

5.5 GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The policy shall promote democratic governance and ensure gender equity and equality before the laws of Malawi.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Malawi constitutional framework incorporates a bill of rights, and guarantees gender equality. It also advocates separation of powers, respect of human rights and the principles of popular participation. From the point of view of democratic governance, the gender policy will address the concern of female representation in political decision making. The issues of gender discrimination are pervasive throughout the Malawian Society. Therefore, women's interests would be represented within all public decision making institutions.

Women's participation in the political sphere even with the introduction of multiparty democracy is limited to the maintenance of the support base. Men despite election campaign rhetoric such as promises to have at least 25% women participation dominate the central executives of all political parties. Women are under represented at most levels of government, especially in ministerial and other executive bodies and boards as well as in the parliament. The current June 1999 Presidential and Parliamentary elections only ushered in 17 women out of 35. Similarly, the decision-making bodies on rural development at district; area and village levels were dominated by men. Therefore, the gender policy aims to promote Affirmative Action for women's participation in politics and decision-making. Malawi as a member state of SADC and signatory to SADC Declaration of 1997 is committed to fulfill the 30% Affirmative Action of women in political and decision making positions by the year 2005.

Human rights and fundamental freedoms are the birthrights of all human beings. Their protection and promotion is the first responsibility of government. In Malawi issues of gender inequality and women's rights are extremely serious and central development concerns.

The Malawi Constitution guarantees these rights to every citizen and is also specific on women's rights. The Constitution acknowledges that violence against women is a problem that needs to be eradicated from society. Section 24, sub-section 2 (a) states that:

"Any law that discriminates against women on the basis of gender or marital status shall be invalid and legislation shall be passed to eliminate customs and practices that discriminate against women, particularly practices such as –

- (a) Sexual abuse, harassment and violence;
- (b) Discrimination in work, business and public affairs; and
- (c) Deprivation of property, including property obtained by inheritance."

In the Bill of Rights, Chapter 4, gender equity, inheritance and guidelines on family and marriage are enshrined. However, there is still a lot of gender-based public and domestic violence particularly against women and children despite this constitutional

provision. Further more, there is a general lack of access to legal services and education, and lack of support services to the abuser and the abused. In addition, the human rights and legal institutions like the judiciary, the Police, the Prisons, and the Military are generally not fully gender responsive to the needs of women and children.

It is critical that all the discriminatory laws, including customary laws and legal practices will be removed or amended. Article 20 of the Malawi Constitution gives women clear and explicit protection from discriminatory practices. Article 24 makes all discriminatory laws invalid, and especially mentions women's equal rights to acquire and maintain property. This implies that the gender policy will advocate for reform of customary laws and practices so as to bring them in line with the constitutional provisions. The challenge to the gender policy is how to ensure that the constitutional principles prevail over the present customary laws and practices. The gender policy must address the customary laws because much of the discrimination against women by public and private institutions arises neither from statutory laws nor government policies, but from the underlying customary laws which generally govern the gender relations.

5.5.0 Gender Specific Objectives

5.5.1 To lobby for the creation of a conducive policy and legal environment for men and women of Malawi to enjoy their human and legal rights.

Strategies

5.5.1.1 Encourage the provision of legal education on human rights to women, men, girls and boys.

5.5.1.2 Advocate for the incorporation of human rights education into the school curricula.

5.5.1.3 Advocate for the review of all oppressive statutory practices and customary laws that perpetuate gender discrimination.

5.5.1.4 Advocate for the translation and dissemination of the progressive constitutional provisions and laws into vernacular to create legal awareness so that people can understand and defend their rights.

5.5.2 To lobby for the elimination of traditional and bureaucratic barriers, all forms of gender based violence and imbalances that undermine active participation and contribution of women and men to development.

5.5.2.1 Promote research to establish gender imbalances, the level and nature of gender based violence, traditional and bureaucratic barriers to men's and women's participation.

5.5.2.2 Encourage the dissemination of research findings through various channels.

5.5.2.3 Encourage the review of the roles of organizations promoting human rights and legal education particularly women's rights.

5.5.2.4 Lobby for the provision of technical and financial support to organizations promoting legal and human rights education.

5.5.2.5 Encourage the implementation of the decentralization policy to enhance people's participation.

5.5.3 To lobby for the harmonization of all International Conventions and Declarations on Human Rights to which Malawi is a signatory with the national laws.

Strategies

- 5.5.3.1 Advocate for the review of the national laws so that they are in harmony with international conventions and declarations.
- 5.5.3.2 Sensitise the population on these conventions and declarations.

GOOD GOVERNANCE

Good governance aims at providing an environment in which individuals feel protected, civil societies are able to flourish and government carries out its responsibilities effectively and transparently with adequate institutional mechanisms to ensure accountability. Respect for human rights and the rule of law are necessary components of any effort to make peace durable. These are cornerstones of good governance. By signaling its commitment to respecting human rights, a Government can demonstrate its commitment to building a society in which all can live freely. Good governance also requires the effective management of resources. Democratic governance helps guarantee political rights, protect economic freedoms and foster an environment where peace and development can flourish.

GOVERNANCE

- 5.5.1 To advocate for the increased capacity of women in decision making positions at all levels.

Strategies

- 5.5.1.1 Sensitize women to support and promote fellow women in decision making positions at all levels.
- 5.5.1.2 Encourage women to take an active part in decision making at all levels.
- 5.5.1.3 Promote the provision of information and management training to enable women participate in the decision making process.
- 5.5.1.4 Lobby for the appointment of at least 30% women to decision making positions.
- 5.5.1.5 Lobby for leadership and assertiveness training to women and girls to prepare them for decision-making positions.
- 5.5.1.6 To promote understanding among men, women, boys and girls on their roles and responsibilities as citizens.

Strategies

- 5.5.2.1 Encourage the creation of awareness on the roles and responsibilities of a good citizen.

5.6 POVERTY ERADICATION AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Government shall create a conducive environment to enable women, men and the vulnerable segments of the society to participate and benefit equitably from productive work in all sectors of development. For poverty eradication and economic empowerment of communities, government shall promote participatory approaches to development. This is to enhance participation of vulnerable groups of the population in development programmes to improve their socio-economic status.

Poverty in Malawi is a pervasive problem affecting about 60% of the population. While everybody is affected, women, children, the elderly and people with disabilities

are affected more. This is due to lack of access and control of productive resources and economic structures. Women in Malawi are active in a variety of economic activities ranging from wage labour, smallholder farming, fishing to the informal sector. However, their effective participation is constrained by several factors. These include access to land, capital, credit, technology, deep-rooted cultural practices and high illiteracy levels.

The few women employed in the formal sector are in low paid stereo-typed jobs which limits their ability to break through to higher echelons of management and decision making where economic decisions that affect their lives are made.

Although the informal sector employment is increasingly becoming an important source of livelihood for many Malawians especially women and youths, it is unfortunately not fully developed. This calls on government to strengthen the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) initiatives to enhance women, men and youth participation in the informal sector for economic empowerment and poverty eradication.

Business in the informal sector is vibrant and growing rapidly, as the majority of the poor men and women start micro and small businesses for family survival. The majority face constraints including access to credit, information, inefficient marketing, and storage and transportation facilities which hinder their effective participation. The situation of women is exacerbated by lack of business management skills, business information, high illiteracy, cultural attitudes and practices. The gender policy shall promote economic empowerment of the poor women and men through gender sensitive community participatory approaches to address the inequalities that constrain effective participation in economic activities.

5.6.0 Gender Specific Objectives

EMPLOYMENT

- 5.6.1 To advocate for the creation of a favourable environment for equal employment opportunities and benefits for women, men, girls and boys.

Strategies

- 5.6.1.1 Encourage the review of conditions of service and labour laws to be gender responsive.
- 5.6.1.2 Promote the provision of labour market information in schools and colleges.
- 5.6.1.3 Lobby for women to constitute at least 30% of decision and policy-making positions in the public and private sector.
- 5.6.1.4 Advocate for the formulation of gender responsive policies, rules and regulations that support the development of the informal sector.

- 5.6.2 To encourage the creation of increased employment opportunities for the youth.

Strategies

- 5.6.2.1 Encourage equal employment opportunities for the youth.
- 5.6.2.2 Promote the provision of youth skills training and counseling centres.
- 5.6.2.3 Promote the strengthening of credit mechanisms to allow access to credit by out of school youth.

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

- 5.6.3 To promote the creation of an enabling environment for growth of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

Strategies

- 5.6.3.1 Encourage the provision of skills training in business entrepreneurship, credit management and appropriate technologies to improve productivity for both men and women.
- 5.6.3.2 Lobby for the adoption and implementation of the MSMEs Policy.
- 5.6.3.3 Lobby for government protection of sensitive products in the MSMEs sector.
- 5.6.3.4 Advocate for the enhancement of MSMEs capacity and competitiveness in regional and global trade.
- 5.6.3.5 Promote dissemination and provision of trade and investment information and backstopping services to women and men entrepreneurs.
- 5.6.3.6 Promote linkage and networking between the large-scale industry and MSMEs.
- 5.6.3.7 Encourage the improvement of communication infrastructure.

- 5.6.4 To advocate for the elimination of gender disparities in access to new skills, training, credit, appropriate technologies and markets.

Strategies

- 5.6.4.1 Advocate for engendering of existing formal and non-formal lending, appropriate technology, business management training and marketing institutions.
- 5.6.4.2 Sensitize the society to recognize that women; men, girls and boys can be entrepreneurs.
- 5.6.4.3 Encourage the review of laws that impede equal participation of women and men in business.
- 5.6.4.4 Advocate for the strengthening and provision of credit guarantee funds to MSMEs for both women and men equitably.
- 5.6.4.5 Promote adult literacy for both women and men engaged in MSMEs.
- 5.6.4.6 Support the development of gender sensitive domestic and capital markets in Malawi.

- 5.6.5 To promote the identification, development, acquisition and utilization of value added labour and time saving technologies for the benefit of women and men.

Strategies

- 5.6.5.1 Encourage gender responsive research to identify gender needs in MSMEs for planning purposes and participation of women and men.
- 5.6.5.2 Encourage the dissemination of existing labour saving technologies.
- 5.6.5.3 Promote identification of existing and development of new value adding technologies for MSMEs.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

- 5.6.6 To advocate for the improvement of the socio-economic status of vulnerable groups such as women, children, youth and people with disabilities.
- 5.6.6.1 Encourage the conducting of social mobilization campaigns highlighting the rights of vulnerable groups.

- 5.6.6.2 Encourage programmes for the economic empowerment of families.
- 5.6.6.3 Encourage sensitization campaigns at all levels to address gender issues.
- 5.6.6.4 Encourage training of women, men, girls and boys in family life education and responsible parenthood.
- 5.6.6.5 Promote and advocate for gender equality in the planning and implementation of development programmes.
- 5.6.7 To advocate for provision of equal access for women, men, girls and boys to services aimed at disadvantaged members of the population.

Strategies

- 5.6.7.1 Advocate for the training of social workers at all levels on gender issues.
- 5.6.7.2 Encourage the review of the Children and Young Person's Act for gender sensitivity.
- 5.6.7.3 Promote engendering of NGOs providing services to disadvantaged groups.
- 5.6.7.4 Advocate for the provision of facilities at institutions that train persons with disabilities, which would cater for girls and women.
- 5.6.7.5 Encourage the establishment of community-based projects to assist disadvantaged groups.
- 5.6.7.6 Encourage the development of gender responsive guidelines for the care of orphans.
- 5.6.8 To promote self-reliance of both women and men, particularly in the rural areas.

Strategies

- 5.6.8.1 Promote the training of leaders particularly at grassroots level on issues that hinder local development.
- 5.6.8.2 Advocate for the review of the curricula on the training of leaders and community development extension workers to incorporate gender issues.
- 5.6.8.3 Encourage the development and distribution of gender responsive guidelines for the formation of community-based development committees.

6.0 BUDGETING

No policy will succeed unless adequate resources are allocated for its effective implementation. The Government of Malawi shall promote mainstreaming of gender into national budgetary process and shall make adequate budgetary allocations for all aspects of the National Gender Policy within the available national resources.

Mainstreaming gender concerns into national budgetary process shall be achieved in particular by examining national budgets for gender sensitivity and estimating budgetary expenditures going towards priority areas as they affect women and men.

7.0 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The Institutional Framework for implementation of the National Gender Policy shall comprise structures and institutions within and outside Government which aim to achieve equity for women, men, boys and girls as participants, decision makers and beneficiaries in the economic, political, civil, social and cultural spheres. These structures and institutions shall be co-coordinated by the Central Government body responsible for spearheading gender responsive development and in particular ensuring the improvements of women's status. Hence, the institutional framework embraces all other systems put in place by the institutions including sectoral Ministries and Departments, Non-Governmental

Organisations, the Private Sector, Civil Society, Community Based Organisations and all donor agencies gender units under the umbrella of the Malawi Development Assistance Group on Gender.

Bearing in mind that gender issues are multi-sectoral and cut across all areas of development, it is imperative that inter-agency and inter-institutional linkages are promoted. To promote gender equality and equity in the national development system, the existing government and other stakeholder's machinery at all levels shall be harnessed for the implementation and co-ordination of the National Gender Policy. At National Level, the established National Machinery to spearhead the over all co-ordination of mainstreaming gender in national development shall be harnessed and strengthened to ensure that gender is mainstreamed within government and civil society by transformation of their institutions, policies, procedures, budgetary allocations and priorities.

7.1 THE NATIONAL MACHINERY

The National Gender Machinery, which is the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Community Services (MOGYCS), specifically the Gender Services Department, is charged with the responsibility of spearheading and coordinating gender responsive development and in particular ensuring the improvement of women's status. For efficiency and effectiveness the Ministry must be adequately funded.

A gender programme shall be established within the department for day to day management of the National Gender Policy. To facilitate efficient and effective policy decision making, the co-ordination of the Gender Programme must be at senior level preferably Deputy Secretary grade.

To promote inter-agency and inter-institutional linkages and effective participation of all key actors in the implementation of the National Gender Policy, MOGYCS shall ensure formation of two multi-sectoral committees. These are:-

- i) A Gender Advisory Committee (GAC) comprising Principal Secretaries. The GAC shall advise the Cabinet on gender issues and ensure implementation of the National Gender Policy. It shall also provide advisory services to the National Machinery, and
- ii) A Gender Policy Implementation Committee (GPIC) to comprise all the focal points from the implementing agencies. Its major roles will be identifying priority gender issues, planning relevant interventions, assess and review progress made in the implementation of the policy. The GPIC will report to GAC.

In order to enhance decentralization, implementation of the National Gender Policy will use the existing institutions of District, Area and Village Assemblies. In addition, the National Machinery will promote establishment of gender networks in NGO's, Civil Service and Private Sector to share information and forge forward-looking strategies for mainstreaming gender concerns in their respective development programmes.

7.2 Roles of the National Gender Machinery.

7.2.1 To co-ordinate the gender policy formulation, implementation and mainstreaming of gender in all sectors.

- 7.2.2 To liaise with other sectors in identifying and drawing attention to key gender concerns and related needs.
- 7.2.3 To provide technical guidance and backstopping services to other sectors including gender training, gender analysis and planning skills to build capacity for gender responsive interventions.
- 7.2.4 To ensure that policy formulation, reviews, action plans and budgeting apply a gender responsive planning approach.
- 7.2.5 To co-ordinate the collection of gender desegregated data, disseminate the data for national development planning and develop a data bank.
- 7.2.6 To produce and disseminate publications on gender issues regularly.
- 7.2.7 To establish and maintain a gender resource centre.
- 7.2.8 To promote social mobilization for creating gender awareness and positive attitudinal and behavioural changes necessary for the establishment and maintenance of gender equity and equality.
- 7.2.9 To spearhead capacity building within the National Gender Machinery and in all sectors.
- 7.2.10 To spearhead advocacy for gender issues.
- 7.2.11 To initiate the review of gender discriminatory laws.
- 7.2.12 To lobby the Treasury, NGO's, the private sector and donors for more resource allocation towards gender mainstreaming.
- 7.2.13 In liaison with the key sectors, monitor and evaluate progress made towards achieving gender responsive national development.

7.3 Roles of other sectors

Besides sectoral ministries the National Machinery (MOGYCS) shall collaborate closely with other key actors, such as NGO's, Community Based Organisations (CBO), the Private Sector and Local Authorities to implement and achieve the goals of the gender policy.

Within these agencies, co-ordination of gender issues across sub-sectors shall be enhanced through establishment of Gender Focal points manned by senior officers. In addition, an Inter-agency Gender Technical Committee shall be established to oversee the mainstreaming of gender concern within their policies, plans, programmes and activities.

The roles of other agencies include, but not limited to the following:-

- 7.3.1 Co-ordination of gender activities within the sector.
- 7.3.2 Mainstream gender in all sectoral policies, plans, projects, programmes and services.
- 7.3.3 Assess and build sectoral capacities to create awareness and understanding on gender concerns.
- 7.3.4 Identify and prioritise gender concerns and issues within the sector and take appropriate action.
- 7.3.5 Advocacy and guidance within the sector to develop and implement gender responsive programmes.
- 7.3.6 Mobilise resources for gender mainstreaming.
- 7.3.7 Establish a documentation centre within the sector.
- 7.3.8 Institute information and management system that is gender sensitive.
- 7.3.9 Link and collaborate with other sectors and the National Machinery for mainstreaming and information sharing.

7.4 National Economic Council

The National Economic Council (NEC) provides professional and technical support to government and the public on economic and social policy, management and development. As a co-coordinator for development planning, NEC has an important role in safeguarding the operationalisation of the gender policy by ensuring that gender issues are mainstreamed throughout all aspects of the national development planning. In collaboration with other sectoral ministries, NEC shall ensure that women and men are equally targeted and benefit from all development programmes.

Specific roles of NEC in implementation of the gender policy shall include but not limited to the following:-

- 7.4.1 Ensure that all policies, macro and micro are gender responsive.
- 7.4.2 Build capacity of planners and policy analysts to enhance their gender analysis skills in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Community Services, as a strategy for establishing effective structural linkages between central and sectoral planning and local authorities.
- 7.4.3 Ensure that all data collected, analysed and disseminated by the National Statistics Office is desegregated by gender.

8.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The National Gender Policy implementation requires an integrated and effective monitoring and evaluation system with appropriate and efficient feedback mechanisms. This requires undertaking monitoring and evaluation functions at all levels including gathering information at the macro, sectoral and grassroots levels. To facilitate this process, an institutionalized approach should be adopted to develop and establish internal self-monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for all stages of programming. This institutionalized framework entails developing appropriate monitoring and evaluation instruments such as performance indicators. These indicators should be in-built in all activities starting from the initial planning stage, for assessing the implementation of the gender policy at all levels.

The effectiveness of the system calls for strengthening and enhancing gender planning skills for all those involved, assigning a high level officer to co-ordinate gender responsive planning who will ensure that the gender perspective is reflected in all sectoral activities of policy development and implementation.

In addition to these internal mechanisms, clear linkages and relationships with the National Machinery, inter-agency and inter-institutional linkages are necessary for the operationalisation and success of the National Gender Policy.