



Government of Malawi

## **MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND CIVIC EDUCATION**



### **FIRST JOINT MANAGEMENT MEETING**

# **REPORT**

**HIPPO VIEW LODGE  
19 - 20 MAY 2011**

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**ACRONYMS AND GLOSSARY**

ACL	Access Communications Limited
CIRMS	Consolidated ICT Regulatory Management Services/System
DIO	District Information Officer
DISTMS	Department of Information Systems and Technology Management Services
DNS	Domain Name System: the "phone book" for the Internet by translating human-friendly computer hostnames into Internet Protocol (IP) addresses
DoI	Department of Information
GPS	Global Positioning System. Uses space satellites
HRMIS	Human Resource Management Information System
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IFMIS	Integrated Financial Management Information System
ISP	Internet Service Provider
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
MACRA	Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority
MALTIS	Malawi Traffic Information System. The system is currently managing Road Traffic Information as well as Vehicle and Drivers Licensing
MANA	Malawi News Agency
MBC	Malawi Broadcasting Corporation
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MICE	Ministry of Information and Civic Education
MIM	Malawi Institute of Management
MPC	Malawi Posts Corporation
NACIT	National College of Information Technology. The college has campuses in Blantyre and Lilongwe

OPC	Office of the President and Cabinet
Open Access	No discrimination on use of the facility or service
Pan-African eNetwork	An African Union programme sponsored and supported by the Government of India, linking hospitals, university colleges and Heads of State in African countries among each other and with specialty institutions in India.
PPP	Public-Private-People Participation
RCIP	Regional Communications Infrastructure Programme
RCIP-MW	Regional Communications Infrastructure Programme – Malawi Project
SIM Card	Subscriber Identity Module card. A SIM card is a portable, exchangeable memory chip used in (some) cellular phones
Teledensity	Number of telephone subscribers in a population
TNM	Telekom Networks Malawi
VAN	Value Added Network
VoIP	Voice over Internet Protocol. Voice Communication is done between two or more IP-based and networked terminals (computers or Internet telephones)
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal: a satellite communications system

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Minister of Information and Civic Education, during his first staff meeting held in the Conference Room, instructed that a meeting for the Departments and Statutory Corporations under the Ministry should be convened. The purpose of the meeting was to promote closer working relationship among the heads of the institutions.

During the same meeting quoted above, a committee was elected to plan for and oversee the execution of the meeting. The committee identified Liwonde's Hippo View Lodge as the ideal venue for the meeting as it would facilitate short travelling distances to all institutions which are located in Lilongwe and Blantyre.

The meeting was attended by the Minister, Deputy Minister, Principal Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Director Generals, Directors and senior managers from the Ministry Headquarters, Malawi Broadcasting Corporation, Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA), the Department of Information Systems and Technology Management Services (DISTMS), Malawi Posts Corporation (MPC) and the Department of Information (DoI). A full list of attendees is in Annex 10.

Mr. W. Kamanga chaired the organizing committee that coordinated logistics for preparations and during the meeting. Members were Mr. B. Chitsonga, Mrs. G. Hiwa, Mr. A. Mwale, Ms. S. Hamisi, Mrs. L. Munthali and Ms. Chilimba.

## **2. OBJECTIVE**

The meeting was convened with the following objectives:

- a) Report on progress, achievements, and challenges of the 2010/2011 financial year;
- b) Report on plans and programmes for 2011/2012 financial year; and
- c) Facilitate networking among senior Managers from the Ministry Headquarters, MBC, MACRA, DISTMS, MPC and DoI.

## **3. PROGRAMME OF EVENTS**

The meeting was planned to span over two days, following the Programme of Events prepared by the Ministry Headquarters.

The meeting was chaired by P.S. J. D. Kalilangwe, Secretary for Information and Civic Education. Mr. Hamilton Chimala from MBC was the Director of Ceremonies for the whole duration of the meeting and offered excellent services.

## **4. OPENING CEREMONY**

### **4.1. Speeches**

- a) The Secretary for Information, Mr. James Donald Kalilangwe gave Introductory Remarks after requesting each member to introduce themselves. In his remarks, Mr. Kalilangwe expressed gratitude to the Minister for initiating these meetings which would become a regular event for monitoring of progress as well as fostering a close working environment in the Ministry.
- b) The Deputy Minister, Honourable Trasizio Thom Gowelo, M. P., in his opening remarks, stressed on the need for active participation of the Ministry in Regional and International forums to ensure that Malawi benefits from the opportunities in the global village. He further informed members that Malawi was, in May, 2011, elected Vice Chair of the CODIST II Bureau in Addis Ababa, and that the Ministry needed to get organized and live up to expectations.
- c) The Official Opening Speech was made by the Minister, Honourable Symon Vuwa Kaunda, M. P. In his speech, the Minister indicated that he expected team work and team spirit from the managers to ensure that the Ministry operates efficiently even when faced with challenges. The Minister indicated that the Ministry needs to give the best service to other Ministries and to the general public in the quest for delivering information services.

The Minister gave a list of focus areas that each institution was expected to report on during the current meeting, which were:

- 1. GWAN performance.
- 2. Government Website status.
- 3. Digital Broadcasting Migration Progress.
- 4. Regional Communications Infrastructure Programme.
- 5. National College of Information Technology status.
- 6. ICT Projects of national interest.
- 7. Civic Education Division performance and set-up.
- 8. Utilisation of District Information Officers and Information Attaches within the Foreign Service.
- 9. Production and circulation of publications.
- 10. Status on "Connect Constituency" and "Connect a Post Office" initiatives.



11. “Reach Out and Touch” and “Parliamentary Live Coverage” initiatives.
  12. Strategy on accommodating excess members of staff from MBC, in view of the directive from His Excellency the President that nobody at MBC should lose their job because of the reorganization process.
  13. Improvement and expansion of MBC network coverage to ensure that MBC is heard all over the country.
  14. Strategies on improving the performance of MPC.
  15. Commercialisation, modernisation, service improvement, renovations, introduction of new and innovative services such as remote banking services in Post Offices.
- d) Mr. Kumbatira from MPC thanked the Minister for his initiative on this networking meeting which is good for planning together. This meeting, he said, will give senior managers more energy to take the organisations forward even in the face of challenges. He also thanked the Ministers for their advice to always remember the mandates of the respective institutions and the Ministry.

## **4.2. Group Photograph**

A group photograph was taken. Copies of the best picture were made into portraits which were given to each institution as a memoire.



## **5. PRESENTATIONS**

### **5.1. Ministry of Information & Civic Education Headquarters**

#### **5.1.1. Introduction**

Mr Willy Kamanga, the Under-Secretary in the Ministry Headquarters, gave a presentation on the background and the current set-up of the Ministry of Information and Civic Education.

Mr. Kamanga indicated that the mandate of the Ministry Headquarters is to give overall policy guidance to all the institutions under the Ministry of Information and Civic Education”.

In his presentation, he highlighted the absence of an overall Ministerial Strategic Plan despite the fact that each Parastatal and Department has its own Strategic Plan.

#### **5.1.2. Comments**

Comments on the presentation included the following observations:

1. There is a very high vacancy rate: The Ministry is currently trying to fill most of the vacancies and the vacancy rate is gradually reducing.
2. Ministry’s Strategic Plan: This was seen as a very serious challenge which needs addressing immediately. Members agreed to develop a Strategic Plan during the 2011/12 FY.
3. Progress Reports to OPC and to the State President are not being submitted by this Ministry. The Ministry Headquarters was tasked to coordinate the submission by both Departments (DISTMS and DoI) and to ensure that these periodic and mandatory progress reports are submitted.
4. Members noted that a Financial report was not included in the presentation by the Ministry Headquarters.
5. It was noted that support for the Minister, in his capacity as the Government spokesperson, was inadequate. The Department of Information explained that the Government Press Unit has just been set up to give this type of support, but the unit is not yet fully operational due to the fact that appropriate staff have not yet taken up the vacant positions. In addition there is need to train the press officers in order to give skilled and relevant

support to the Minister. Mr. Mankhambo of MACRA was identified to assist in partial training of the Press Officers.

6. It was noted that District Information offices are not being supported with adequate facilities to make the DIOs more efficient and enable them do their core duties. There is need to look at how the DIOs can be empowered.
7. MBC finds it difficult to access funds from the Inter-ministerial committee fund for elections yet these funds are being accessed by private radio stations (e.g. ZODIAK). The Ministry was requested to help in lobbying, on behalf of MBC, for access to the funds.
8. It was noted that the presence of the Department of Statutory Corporations at these meetings is crucial because of the participation of the three (3) Statutory Corporations. It was therefore agreed that an invitation should be extended to them for future meetings. A copy of the report of this meeting should be submitted to the Department of Statutory Corporations.

## **5.2. Malawi Broadcasting Corporation**

Mr. Bright Malopa, the Director General of MBC, gave a presentation titled **“Bringing a dying brand back to life”**. He started by responding to the queries from the Honourable Minister on why people could not tune in to MBC Radio over the previous few days. Mr. Malopa explained that ESCOM power outages and surges had damaged generators at Mpingwe and Zomba Stations.

### **5.2.1. Background**

In his main presentation, Mr. Malopa gave a brief background on the situation in which MBC was at the time that he took over management of the institution, and where he and his current team of managers have brought it to.

### **5.2.2. Business Units**

He indicated that four (4) business units have been created, i.e. Radio 1, Radio 2, TV Services and the Development Broadcasting Unit. A fifth unit will be created to handle signal distribution.

### **5.2.3. Partnerships**

Mr. Malopa reported that BBC and Radio France use MBC infrastructure to broadcast their programmes in the country, which brings some revenue to MBC. Channel Africa and Radio ABC have expressed interest to use MBC infrastructure in the near future. Some Telecom service providers have shown interest to partner with MBC as well. MBC is planning to erect towers that can provide space that can be leased to telecom providers.

### **5.2.4. Plans**

1. MBC plans to introduce Radio 3 which will be dedicated to policy matters. A license application has already been submitted to MACRA.
2. TV Channel 2 will be introduced as a business channel. This will utilize some of the excess bandwidth that will be realized after migrating to digital transmission.
3. Expand and extend “Reach Out and Touch” and other programs in order to bring back to life a dead institution. Plans are underway to extend the program to other countries in partnership with Airtel on one hand and with the People’s Republic of China on the other hand.

### **5.2.5. Challenges**

1. Perception by the public as being inefficient and pro-Government.
2. To make MBC self-reliant and self-sponsored.

### **5.2.6. Comments**

The following comments were made based on questions from the floor:

1. Local content production will be stimulated through licensing of new content production operators. MBC will be empowered to carry a maximum of 20 Television and 20 Radio channels through the digital broadcasting transmission and multiplexing.
2. Radio 1 is now broadcasting 24 hours a day, an improvement over the past when MBC would switch to international news broadcasting stations at midnight.
3. MBC is seeking a tripartite meeting with the Ministry and MACRA to sort out the issue of branding Radio 1. MBC was advised to seek advice before making public announcements on issues that have a legal or policy implication.
4. MBC plans to reduce the workforce from about 700 to about 400 or less due to the merger of MBC and TVM. The Ministry is expected to explore how the excess staff can be absorbed in Government departments according to each person's qualifications and skills. The meeting was reminded of the fact that some former employees have been employed by institutions like MACRA and the Department of Information. Some of them have experience in schools broadcasting programmes and they could be absorbed at the Domasi Institute, Department of Information (Film Unit), MIM audio-visual unit. Some of them could go to Embassies abroad or become Personal Assistants.
5. There has not been much progress on the renovation of the Lilongwe MBC Studios due to problems encountered with working with the Buildings Department in terms of Bills of Quantities. MBC was not allowed to engage local consultants of their choice and they were advised to use the Buildings Department, which is proving too costly. MBC requested for the intervention of the Ministry.

### **5.3. Special Presentation of Blankets by the Red Cross (Malawi)**

The Red Cross President and Secretary General made a presentation of ninety (90) blankets worth K600,000, for the “Reach and Touch” Programme. The Honourable Minister received the donation on behalf of MBC. In his remarks, the Minister stated that His Excellency the State President has a heart for the poor, and the donation made on this day was in line with his passion for helping the poor. He promised that the blankets will reach the intended beneficiaries, and viewers will watch the handover ceremony through MBC.

The President of Malawi Red Cross said that Red Cross is a bridge between those that are blessed and those that are less privileged. He said that this was just part of the donation, a beginning of more donations in partnership with MBC through the “Reach out and Touch” programme. He thanked friends from Japan who have given this type of assistance for the past 11 years now. He appealed for more people to give to the needy, and he hoped that by watching this gesture on television, more people would feel more compassion for the poor and donate more. He handed over the blankets on behalf of the Board, Council and volunteers of Red Cross.

In his remarks, the Director General of MBC, Mr. Malopa stated that the “Reach Out and Touch” programme is intended to benefit the less privileged, the poor, the elderly and the sick.

## **5.4. Privatisation Commission: Regional Communications Infrastructure Project**

Mr. Chimwemwe Matemba, the Project Manager for the RCIP-MW, delivered a presentation of the Malawi Project under the Regional Communications Infrastructure Programme.

### **5.4.1. Introduction**

Mr. Matemba indicated that the Programme, which is supported by the World Bank, covers the Southern Africa. The Malawi Project is supported through a credit agreement worth US\$20million. The project covers strengthening the enabling environment, facilitating connectivity as well as project management components. The objective of the project is to facilitate the provision of International broadband connectivity from submarine fiber optic cables to a Virtual Landing Point in the country for wholesale distribution, through a PPP arrangement. The Project is being coordinated by the Privatization Commission.

### **5.4.2. Justification**

Malawi's communications costs are very high due to the technology used for accessing Internet and international connectivity. Fiber Optic Cables facilitate cheaper connectivity to any country. Malawi has some connectivity through Mozambique, provided by Malawi Telecommunications Limited and ESCOM. The cost of communication has not been brought down to affordable levels due to several factors. It is envisaged that bringing a third cable on "Open Access" arrangement will bring facilitate healthy competition and stimulate production and transmission of more electronic content and information.

### **5.4.3. Comments**

The following comments were based on questions from the floor:

1. The project is running on course. Malawi acceded to the project later than Rwanda but Malawi's project is running at a faster pace even when compared to that of Rwanda.
2. Government is currently purchasing 16M of capacity from MTL but the price is prohibitive. Consequently, Government is unable to buy enough capacity, hence contributing to the slow speed of Internet on GWAN. This backs up the argument for introducing competition in this area.

3. The Ministry should explore the use of ESCOM's infrastructure for hoisting the fiber optic cable in order to reduce the cost of investment, as it has been proven that fiber optic cables that run through dug-up trenches are far more expensive to lay and more vulnerable to vandalism.
4. The Ministry should consider and prepare for licensing a new entrant in the provision of broadband connectivity in order to introduce competition in this area. This is in recognition of the fact that there is basically a single operator whose services are still too costly and therefore broadband connectivity is still expensive in the country.



## 5.5. Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA)

Mr. Ben Chitsonga, the Director of Finance and Administration, presented what MACRA does and manages, as follows:

### 5.5.1. Introduction

Mr. Chitsonga indicated that MACRA's vision is ***"To be a world class ICT regulator ensuring universal access to ICT services"***. He also articulated the Mission, which is ***"An ICT regulator promoting the development of the ICT sector through, investment, monitoring, research and training to professionally deliver reliable and affordable communications services throughout Malawi"***.

### 5.5.2. Directorates

MACRA has four main technical directorates, namely Telecommunications, Broadcasting, Postal Services and Management of Spectrum. These are supported by the Executive, Finance & Administration and Legal Services.

### 5.5.3. Progress

Mr Chitsonga narrated that the current statistics in terms of licenses issued is as follows:

- 2 fixed line operators (MTL & ACL)
- 3 mobile operators (TNM, Airtel & Celcom Limited).
- 1 Carrier of Carriers Operator (ESCOM).
- 3 International gateway operators (MTL, Celtel & TNM).
- 148 VSAT operators.
- 400 + radiocommunication operators in respect of different spectrum dependent services.
- 14 active Internet Service Providers (ISP's) currently in operation.
- Data services offered as part of ISP licence
- 4 Terrestrial TV broadcasters (TVM, Calvary Church TV, Luntha & All for Jesus).
- 1 Digital Satellite TV broadcasters (Multichoice).
- 2 Public radio broadcasters (MBC radio 1 & 2)
- 21 other broadcasters (Private commercial / religious / community).
- 1 Public Postal Operator (MPC).
- 16 Courier operators

#### **5.5.4. Licensing Structure**

Mr. Chitsonga indicated that currently MACRA is using a Technology-Neutral and Service Specific Licensing structure for both Individual Licenses (competitive tendering for both fixed and mobile voice services) and for General Licenses (mere registration for ISPs, data and VANs, etc).

MACRA is getting ready to start implementing a Technology and/or Service Neutral Licensing structure which will be categorized into Application Services, Facilities, Network Services, Content Services, etc.

#### **5.5.5. ICT Penetration Rates**

The ICT Penetration rates have improved over the past 10 years. As at the end of 2010, the teledensity is at close to 24%, most of it from the mobile subscription through Airtel and TNM.

#### **5.5.6. Achievements during the 2010/2011 Financial Year**

1. Acquisition of new Monitoring Sites: Land has been acquired; evaluation of bids from suppliers of equipment is underway.
2. Launch CIRMS project: The project is under review by the OPC, and it is expected to be launched next financial year.
3. New mobile telephony license has been issued to CELCOM.
4. 19 Telecentres established and are operational. The plan is to establish at least one telecentre in each District.
5. Internet connectivity has been finalized at Catholic and SDA Universities. The plan was to connect at least three (3) public Universities.
6. Issue ten new broadcasting licenses: Advert for new licences was made, 36 applications received and evaluation is awaiting clearance from Government.
7. Acquire a new media monitoring equipment by December 2010: Supplier has been identified and commissioning expected in June 2011.
8. Acquire Global Positioning System (GPS) for postal assessing postal quality of service: Supplier has been identified and first component expected before the end of the year.
9. Start construction of office complex by July 2010: Land was acquired in Lilongwe Area 13. Construction has not commenced as there are no utilities on the plot.

10. Establish regional office in Lilongwe by Sept 2010: The office was secured and occupied in April 2011 (Oxfam offices).
11. Finalize the review of Communications Act: Finished all stakeholder consultation, now at drafting stage.

#### **5.5.7. Challenges in 2010/2011 Financial Year**

1. Operators' resistance to new technology derailing progress of the CIRMS project.
2. Illegal broadcasters and courier operators.
3. Difficulties in securing forex affected the procurement of some important equipment.
4. Continued absence of dividend policy affected the cash flow projection for the Authority.
5. Delays in obtaining Government approval for some staff related issues (House ownership scheme and functional review).

#### **5.5.8. Plans and Projects for 2011/2012**

1. **Launch of "Connect a Constituency" Project:** Telecentres will be established in every constituency in Malawi. The plan is to start with 20 telecenters.
2. **Implementation stage for the Regional Communications Infrastructure Project (RCIP) on Last Mile Connectivity:** This is a World Bank funded project aimed at connecting Malawi to submarine cables in Tanzania. The first phase will involve Internet connectivity to over 20 teachers development centre in Malawi.
3. **Commissioning of Consolidated ICT Regulatory Management Service (CIRMS):** The project will improve monitoring of quality of service for telecom operators, revenue assurance and fraud management.
4. **Commencement of construction of modern office complex:** MACRA is planning to commence construction of modern office complex in Blantyre.
5. **Introduction of converged telephony licensing regime:** The new licensing structure will remove distinction on fixed or mobile operators.
6. **Participate in ITU Telecom World 2011 –showcasing ICT development in Malawi:** The event will be held in Geneva where member countries of ITU are required to showcase their developments in ICT. This will present a forum for sharing ideas and networking with other regulators.

7. **Setting the framework for universal services in postal services:** The public postal operator has the responsibility to ensure availability of postal services to rural areas which are not profitable. The establishment of Universal Access will result in creation of a fund to support the provision of postal services in rural areas.
8. **Continuation of the Digital Migration project:** MACRA will continue taking active part on the project.

#### 5.5.9. Way Forward

1. **Studies / Research**
  - Finalize the cost of doing business study.
  - Finalize the report on EMF from telecom towers
2. **Access**
  - Establishment and implementation of the Universal Access Fund (UAF).
3. **ICT Development**
  - Establishment of a telecentre in every district.
4. **Administrative**
  - Build a new office complex.
  - Enhance capacity building.
5. **Technical**
  - Finalize review of the National Frequency Band Plan.
  - Implement a converged licensing framework.
  - Institute mandatory number registration and consider implementation of number portability.
6. **Corporate Social Responsibility**
  - Increase ICT related assistance to educational institutions.
7. **Legislation**
  - Finalize review of the Communications Act.
  - Review current regulations and develop new regulations.
  - Implement policy directions on ICT development as stipulated in the National ICT policy.
8. **Consumer issues**
  - Establish a unit within MACRA on consumer protection

#### 5.5.10. Comments

The following comments were based on questions from the floor:

1. MACRA is doing a good job.

2. Initiatives towards SIMcard registration: Number portability will be done in the near future. The new system will also assist in SIMcard registration. This will be covered by the new legislations/regulations which are being drafted.
3. Telecentres: It was noted that there are long queues in telecentres. MBC proposed to provide TV services in the telecentres, so that the people on queue can be entertained. MACRA and MBC agreed to partner on this.
4. Monitoring equipment being purchased will not be able to determine numbers in terms of viewership. The new machine will be able to catch signals throughout the country and enable MACRA to check content, but will not be able to determine number of viewers or listeners.
5. MACRA was thanked for always assisting the Ministry headquarters. However, the meeting requested the Ministry headquarters to follow laid down procedures for requesting assistance from any of the institutions under the Ministry to avoid audit queries as well as queries from the Department of Statutory Corporations.
6. New regulations are being studied by the Ministry of Justice. The new regulations will improve on the negative publicity on MACRA. Ministers were requested to assist by intervening with Ministry of Justice.
7. Tariff Reduction and Expansion of services: Regulator does not set prices for services but these are justified to MACRA. Prices can only be brought down through introduction of competition, which MACRA is doing by issuing licenses to more operators.
8. Members complained on the annoying practice by mobile operators that send marketing messages to mobile phones. MACRA explained that this has been brought to their attention and they have taken Airtel to task for the third time.
9. MACRA was requested to work through issues on cross-border signals where bordering countries' networks are accessible when people are travelling near the borders.

## **5.6. Malawi Posts Corporation (MPC)**

Mr. Katunga, the Acting Director of Operations, gave a presentation on the performance of MPC, as follows:

### **5.6.1. Introduction**

MPC is a state-owned and the major player in the Postal Sector in Malawi. He gave recognition of the other fifteen (15) private courier companies in the country. Being the public operator in the postal sector, MPC has the responsibility to provide Universal Postal Services throughout Malawi. This mandates the MPC to deliver its services even to the rural and remote areas, including in places where it is not economically viable to do so. The private operators do not have a similar obligation, and therefore they concentrate on the lucrative urban areas. Proliferation of private operators on the market has negatively affected business at MPC.

### **5.6.2. Postal Network**

There are a total of 179 Post Offices and 154 Postal Agencies, giving a total of 332 postal outlets in the country.

### **5.6.3. Role of MPC and Postal Services**

1. Facilitates communication within the country, and with the rest of the world;
2. Facilitates trade, through the movement of parcels and other goods within the country and internationally;
3. Rural development and poverty alleviation through employment creation, and provision of money transfer services.;
4. Foreign currency generation and inflows into the country through Terminal Dues and Foreign Exchange services ;
5. Bridging the digital divide, through provision of internet cafes and other ICTs within the postal network;
6. Contributes to education and literacy through the international letter writing competitions; and
7. Contributes to GDP through postal revenues.

### **5.6.4. Mandate of MPC**

1. MPC operates in line with Section 76 of the Communications Act of 1998;

2. Provides postal services and others incidental to transmission of postal articles throughout Malawi, and between Malawi and other countries;
3. Establish and operate post offices;
4. Provide financial services;
5. In 2003 MACRA licensed MPC to provide postal services, courier services, and financial services.

#### **5.6.5. Product Portfolio**

1. Domestic and International Mail.
2. Domestic and international parcel service.
3. Domestic and international Expedited Mail Service (EMS).
4. Money transfer service (Fast-cash, money order, postal order).
5. Philately.
6. Agency services.

#### **5.6.6. Trends in Mail Delivery**

The MPC has experienced a downward trend in mail handling since 2006. Parcel handling, however, has increased from 4,457 in 2004 to 25,630 in 2009. The use of the Money transfer facility through MPC has sharply increased from about 3million in 2007 to about 139million in 2010 through the use of Fast Cash facility. The use of money orders has declined sharply. Sales through Philately services have slightly gone down to 3,465,674 in 2009 from 3,885,259 in 2007.

#### **5.6.7. Challenges**

1. To deliver universal service and social responsibility, without any funding mechanism;
2. Declining mail volumes;
3. Growing insecurity due to global terrorism;
4. Underdeveloped infrastructure;
5. Liberalization of postal market;
6. Lack of enforcement of MPC's exclusive rights.
7. 129 out of 179 are loss-making Post Offices. But under the Act, Government is supposed to assist the MPC, but this does not happen.

8. Using manual systems delays in information transmission, resulting in inefficiencies. MPC is in the process of automating some operations for real-time payments, including ESCOM bills, licenses for vehicles, etc.
9. Total Staff is more than 900; 42% of which have Standard 8 certificates and below. 12% are above retirement age. This is a huge human resources challenge.

#### **5.6.8. Financial Performance**

MPC has gone from making serious losses in 2002 (-K184,397) to making profits in 2005 (K34,236) and 2006 (K39,321) then back to making losses in 2008 (-K286,175) and back to making profits in 2010 (K132,824).

#### **5.6.9. Way Forward**

MPC has, for the first time, internally developed a strategic plan. The key objectives in the strategic plan are revenue growth and modernization. However, the major obstacle to achieving the above plans remains lack of funding.

#### **5.6.10. Comments**

The following comments were made following interaction with the members present:

##### **5.6.10.1. Opportunities**

1. MPC have developed a Strategic Plan for the first time.
2. Infrastructure throughout the country.
3. Box rental fees are to be increased
4. Door to door delivery of mail at a cost for corporate citizens will be introduced.
5. Courier and financial services (fast cash) are very popular. This will also be moved onto the mobile cash transfer services (like m-PESA). This will include payment of minibus fares through transfer of units which can be cashed at Post Offices. Waiting for a license from the Reserve Bank.
6. Post Code project will be implemented soon
7. Tele-centres project, in conjunction with MACRA, will be implemented.



8. Looking forward to the Universal Access fund, so that MPC can benefit.
9. MPC is one of the top 5 parastatals with no corruption.

**5.6.10.2. Advice**

1. MPC should tap into the opportunity that has been brought by the introduction of payment of Civil Service salaries through banks.
2. Exclusivity for carrying small parcels should be removed from MPC to encourage competition.
3. Fast Cash facility should be available only where the Post Office is able to dispense the required amounts of cash to avoid frustrating customers. MACRA has received complaints.
4. Business mail and hybrid mail is not available in Malawi. This will be done after automation in the Post Offices.
5. Staffing issue should be handled as a strategic issue.
6. MPC should try to partner with MBC on programmes which can re-stimulate the writing of letters or postcards.
7. MPC is partnering with MBS Bank, using their banking licence, to provide banking services in areas that have potential.
8. MPC Minibuses: the service was terminated after court cases.
9. There is need for advertising the availability of post boxes.

## 5.7. Department of Information Systems and Technology Management Services (DISTMS)

Mr. Machika, the GWAN Manager, gave two brief presentations on programmes under the DISTMS, as follows:

### 5.7.1. DISTMS

DISTMS is responsible for ICT in Government through the delivery of the following services:

- a) Policy development – ICT Policies and strategies;
- b) Applications Development, Systems maintenance and Technical Support;
- c) Government Wide Area Network (GWAN) – Infrastructure and connectivity;
- d) ICT Education and Training - National College of Information Technology (NACIT);

#### 5.7.1.1. Budgets Versus Funding/Expenditure

Detail	Approved 2010/11 (MK)	Estimates 2011/12 (MK)
DISTMS (PE)	71,406,532	64,915,532
DISTMS (ORT)	123,418,010	143,822,894
NACIT (Revenue)	166,000,000	160,000,000
NACIT (Expenditure)	162,000,000	156,000,000
National fiber backbone	150,000,000	
Digital Migration	190,651,500	205,091,000
<b>Total (Less Revenue)</b>	<b>697,476,042</b>	<b>569,829,426</b>

The 2010/11 figures were the approved budget figures. Funding, however, was less than the budgeted figures. The most apparent deficits were in the Digital Migration and National Fiber Backbone Projects where only a total of K40million was funded to cover both projects against a total budget figure of K340,651,500.

#### 5.7.1.2. Achievements Made in 2010/11 Financial Year

DISTMS made the following achievements despite the low budgets and low funding levels:

1. 21 officers recruited on various positions;
2. 30 officers attended courses in various training programs;
3. 86 ICT officers underwent induction courses;
4. Produced 297 graduates (86 BSc, 80 Advanced Diploma and 131 Diploma);
5. Improved learning facilities by procuring 35 computers, 3 laptops, repaired 50 desks and procured 40 sets of computer books for the National College of Information Technology;
6. Government website was redesigned ([www.malawi.gov](http://www.malawi.gov)); MANA and NACIT websites were developed and are ready for launch;
7. Developed a Strategy for Information and Communications which will be incorporated in the MGDS II;
8. Digitalized Cabinet records and facilitated the digitalization of records for public institutions;
9. Initiated the Review of Civil Service ICT Policy, Strategy and Standards. This will continue in 2011/12 Financial Year.
10. Commissioned the Pan-African e-Network. Sites are at Chancellor College (eLearning), Kamuzu Central Hospital (Tele-Medicine) and State House (eVVIP). Maintained and continuously managed and supported the sites.
11. Upgraded software in 250 computers with genuine and licensed Windows software.
12. Upgraded GWAN Internet bandwidth from 6 mbps to 16 mbps.
13. Rolled out GWAN to Mzuzu and Blantyre (still ongoing).
14. Procurement of inverters for power stabilization underway.
15. Renewed Trend antivirus software Enterprise Edition license.
16. Provided technical support to IFMIS, MALTIS and HRMIS.
17. Provided technical support to Ministries and Departments.
18. Repaired computers and printers from Ministries, Departments and Dedza DHO.
19. Conducted site surveys in preparation for Last Mile Connectivity under the RCIP Project.
20. Facilitated a review of the Malawi Traffic Information System.
21. Re-constituted and formalized committees and plan of work for the Digital Migration Project.

#### **5.7.1.3. Planned Activities for 2011/12 Financial Year**

1. Procure 60 computers for NACIT laboratories;
2. Establish a computer museum;
3. Continue providing BSc, Advanced Diploma and Diploma in Computer Studies at NACIT;
4. Provide short computer literacy courses for the general public at NACIT;
5. Re-introduce BSc program for NACIT Lilongwe campus;
6. Train more ICT officers in specialized fields of study;
7. Facilitate the adoption of National and Civil Service ICT Policies;
8. Upgrade 500 computers with genuine Windows software;
9. Conduct national ICT baseline survey;
10. Finalize roll out of GWAN to Mzuzu and Blantyre;
11. Install fiber links in Lilongwe connecting Police Headquarters, Malawi Defence Force Headquarters and Bwaila Hospital with Capital Hill;
12. Implement E-Government Phase 1 (infrastructure and applications);
13. Facilitate the development of Digital Broadcasting Migration Strategy;
14. Facilitate migration from Analogue to Digital Transmission for Television Broadcasting;
15. Facilitate Internet (Last Mile) Connectivity to public institutions (Phases 1 and 2) through the RCIP-MW Project;
16. Facilitate provision of access to Internet and telephony services in development corridors through the Infrastructure Services Project (ISP);
17. Continue providing technical support to the Pan African eNetwork Programme, HRMIS, IFMIS, MALTIS.

#### **5.7.1.4. Challenges**

1. Shortage of staff (numbers and skills);
2. Delays in recruitment processes;
3. Lack of ownership (support) by Ministries/Departments;
4. Inadequate transport;
5. Intermittent and fluctuating power supply;
6. Electrical faults in Government buildings.

7. Non-adherence to ICT standards in: application development, ICT procurement, ICT project management
8. Compromised security of systems through viruses and hacking;
9. Lack of confidence on GWAN Services;
10. Lack of awareness of GWAN;
11. High cost of Internet bandwidth;
12. Intermittent Internet service from MTL;
13. Hygiene – improper disposal of food items. Problems of rodents continue compromising connectivity.

### **5.7.2. Government Wide Area Network (GWAN)**

The GWAN was first established in 1999. Its original mandate was to facilitate the centralized control of a decentralized payroll system, then called the PPPAI and now called the HRMIS. The mandate of the current GWAN has extended to include the development and management of a Government Electronic Network that facilitates implementation of Government Computerized systems.

The goal of the GWAN is to have one Integrated Government network, connecting all Government offices in the country. A network that is secure, reliable, multi-service and fast.

#### **5.7.2.1. Current Status of GWAN**

1. **2000**: Developed Local Area Networks and connected Capital Hill buildings with fiber optic cables;
2. **2001**: Developed Local Area Networks and connected 4 buildings at City Centre using wireless connections. Connected the City Centre buildings with Capital Hill using 2 wireless connections;
3. **2007**: Developed Local Area Networks and connected 9 buildings in City centre;
4. Currently (**2011**) connecting Government buildings in Lilongwe Old Town, Blantyre City and Mzuzu City.

#### **5.7.2.2. Technologies Used on GWAN**

- Wireline : Fiber optic cable and copper (unshielded twisted pair);
- Wireless : Laser (Free Space Optics) and Radio Frequency (RF) links;

- CISCO Switches, Routers and Firewall.
- Server Operating Systems: Windows and Linux

#### **5.7.2.3. Current GWAN Services**

1. Highway for Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS)
2. Highway for Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS)
3. Internet
4. Email
5. Local Area Networks connection for Ministries and Departments
6. Network Security (Up-to date Trend Antivirus, Microsoft Windows Updates)
7. Website hosting for [www.malawi.gov.mw](http://www.malawi.gov.mw) (Malawi Government official website); [www.visitmalawi.mw](http://www.visitmalawi.mw) (Malawi Tourism official website); & [www.foreignaffairs.mw](http://www.foreignaffairs.mw) (Malawi's Foreign Affairs official website).

#### **5.7.2.4. Future Plans for GWAN Services**

1. Roll out GWAN to Districts - 2011 and beyond;
2. Development of a National fiber backbone;
3. Connect to Regional Communications Infrastructure Project (RCIP) network;
4. Enhance GWAN management (introduce better network management tools);
5. Introduce new communication services (Videoconferencing and VoIP) Facility;
6. Set up DNS infrastructure for .gov.mw domains;
7. Set up electronic mailing list infrastructure;

#### **5.7.2.5. GWAN Challenges**

Mr. Machika informed members that the biggest challenge in extending the network and improving GWAN's performance and service lies in the availability of adequate financial resources to cover the huge investment costs. The current scenario is as follows:

1. GWAN Budget for 2011/12 is at MK50,300,000. This amount is supposed to cover all costs for GWAN including Internet bandwidth costs, centralized anti-virus license, maintenance of GWAN infrastructure and equipment.
2. Internet Costs: Current requirement for Internet is 30mbps. DISTMS is able to purchase and provide only 16mbps of Internet bandwidth at a total cost of K73,000,000.
  - RCIP-MW pays MK46,000,000 for 10mbps of Internet bandwidth from MTL;
  - DISTMS pays MK27,000,000 for 6mbps of Internet bandwidth from MTL;
3. Despite the creation of a “National Fiber Backbone” Development Project to facilitate connections to Districts, there is no provision for funds in the 2011/12 budget. The backbone is estimated to cover 3,000km of fiber optic cable.
4. The estimated cost for rolling out to all Government buildings is USD12m.

### **5.7.3. Comments**

The following comments were made on both DISTMS presentations:

1. Official electronic communication should be done using official email accounts/addresses for security reasons. Personal emails sometimes are used as a backup, but primarily, official emails should be used for official email addresses that are registered with the official mail servers.
2. NACIT Lilongwe Campus is planning to offer degree courses despite the fact that NACIT has staffing problems. NACIT Blantyre depends on lecturers from Polytechnic. Maintaining full time lecturers for NACIT is a challenge because of high turnover. NACIT Lilongwe should continue using lecturers from within Lilongwe, possibly including part-time lecturers from Bunda College.
3. DISTMS was advised to explore the possibility of taking out NACIT from mainstream Government to enable it pay higher salaries to lecturers.
4. Security of GWAN: Security mechanisms are in place through antivirus software, firewalls and use of passwords and password policies. Leaking of information is done by people that are able to use the technology for that

purpose. This is a people problem. User awareness is important to ensure that people are using secure passwords.

5. Online publications and blocking of 'nasty' websites: This is going to be addressed by the legal framework that is being developed through the review of the Communications Act.
6. DISTMS were advised to schedule the Principal Secretaries symposium on the National ICT Policy as soon as possible.
7. The official Government website is now secure from hacking; anti-hacking mechanisms have been put in place.
8. Funding for GWAN: DISTMS should develop proposals for more financing resources. GWAN should also explore the use of ESCOM infrastructure for the provision of connectivity and Internet services. ESCOM has reduced its pricing structure for Internet and connectivity.
9. Leadership for the Digital Migration Project: This was resolved through the appointment of a Digital Migration Project Coordinator, Mr. Lupiya of DISTMS.
10. DISTMS should contact MBC on awareness programmes, especially on GWAN.



## **5.8. The Department of Information**

Mr. Bob Chilemba, the Acting Director of Information, gave a presentation on Department of Information, as follows:

### **5.8.1. Introduction**

Department of Information constitutes three divisions: Audio Visual, Press and Publications, and Civic Education.

### **5.8.2. Structure of the Department of Information**

#### **5.8.2.1. The Audio Visual Division**

The Audio Visual Division has two Sections: Audio Visual Section and Malawi Film Unit.

##### **1. Audio Visual Section**

The section is tasked to facilitate dissemination of public information through the provision of audio-visual services to stimulate interest for popular participation in national development. Functions of the Section are:

- Screening film to inform, educate and entertain members of the general public.
- Provision of audio-visual services to government ministries and departments, parastatal organisations, non-governmental organisations, private companies and the general public.
- Carrying out maintenance services of audio-visual equipment and electrical appliances
- Provision of archival services of public events through film screening and other audio services.
- Provision of studio services to small developing rural artist to enhance talent development.

##### **2. Malawi Film Unit**

- The Section produces documentaries for the Department and other Organisations

#### 5.8.2.2. Press and Publications Division

The Press and Publications has two main sections:

##### 1. Malawi News Agency (MANA)

The Malawi News Agency is the news gathering and dissemination organ of the Department. It collects and disseminates information in the form of news and photographs. It is mandated to provide accurate, balanced and timely news and photographs.

It is headquartered in Lilongwe and has three Information Offices in Blantyre, Lilongwe and Mzuzu and District Information Offices in all the 28 districts of the country.

Functions of MANA are:

1. Gather and disseminate hard news, news analyses and feature articles;
2. Provide photographic news services in still and digital format ;
3. Provide news coverage to the Head of State during local and foreign trips;
4. Coordinate press conferences and public debates;
5. Coordinate media coverage of national and international events;
6. Coordinate the Central Office of Information;
7. Provide archival services of public events through Photographs and other print products;
8. Mount photo display boards at State Residences and local airports.

##### 2. Publications Section :

The Section is mandated to produce publications that articulate Government development initiatives, policy formulation and development strategies. Some of the publications produced by the Section are:

- **Boma Lathu:** This is monthly Chichewa newspaper that is distributed freely to all people in Malawi; and specially targets the rural masses
- **Malawi Lero:** is a pictorial publication which intends to depict development projects in pictures
- **Malawi Mail:** This is an English newspaper that comes out fortnightly.

- **This Is Malawi:** An English magazine produced quarterly and sold at a modest cover cost.

### **3. Government Press Unit**

The Section has not yet been formalised as a fully fledged Section. The section analyses media content both print and electronic and advises the government on what action to take. It is also supposed to draft responses on the same.

The Press Unit plays the media advisory role for all Government Ministries and Departments. The Unit is expected to analyse all local and international media content (electronic and print) and forward proposals on how Government can, or should, react to the developments. This is vital so that Government is always proactive and anticipates trends in the media so that it is not always busy refuting media reports or reacting to them.

The Press Unit advocates for the Government position, explaining the merits of the Government's actions. It presents the Government's position in a manner that helps advance its agenda while at the same time helping the press learn and understand what the Government is doing.

#### **5.8.2.3. Civic Education Division**

The Civic Education Division has two main sections: Research and Planning Unit and Civic Education:

##### **1. Research and Planning Unit**

The Section institutionalises communication for research, planning and strategy for development communication activities. The unit identifies or conduct research on an issue or problem and plan how that problem concerning public can be addressed. The unit therefore works hand in hand with Civic Education Section.

##### **2. Civic Education Section**

The section is mandated to educate the citizenry on various socio-economic issues with the aim of imparting knowledge and influencing positive behaviour change; and creating an informed and proactive nation.

Functions of the Civic Education Section are:

- To identify topical issues requiring civic education interventions
- To carry out research to establish causes of socio economic problems
- To develop effective information, education and communication messages and materials
- To produce audio visual materials, radio programmes, jingles and newspaper articles for civic education purposes
- To plan and design civic education campaigns and education fairs
- To write project proposals for civic education programmes
- To present project proposals to potential donors and government development partners
- To identify and maintain a data base of partners in the civic education sector
- To monitor and evaluate civic education programmes and activities
- To formulate budgets for civic education activities

### **5.8.3. Successes**

In spite of the challenges in the Department of Information, the Department has recorded several successes. Some of them are:

1. Structures have been established in all the Districts of the country. The Department has offices at each District manned by a District Information officer, an Audio Visual Technician and other support staff. The offices have a link with the Region and the Department Headquarters;
2. Coverage of VVIP functions. The Department has covered local and international function of the President with great skill;
3. Collection of Revenue. The Department has collected revenue for the Government through adverts in the Malawi Mail, hiring out of public address system equipment, accreditation of foreign journalists and production of documentaries;
4. Dissemination of news stories and photographs;
5. Audio Visual equipment is available in all districts.

#### 5.8.4. Challenges

1. **Lack of computers in districts.** With inadequate number of computers in all the districts, there is a challenge in transmitting news stories. This makes some districts use the old system of dictating the story through phones which has been very expensive. Some districts are using Internet dongles which has proved to be very efficient. The Department, through MANA, is working hard to empower all DIOs with better technology.
2. **Distribution of the Department's productions** such as *Boma Lathu* and *Malawi Mail* has been a problem since the Department moved from Blantyre to Lilongwe in 2005. In the past Malawi Postal Corporation used to deliver *Boma Lathu* freely but this stopped when the Department moved to Lilongwe.
3. **Training:** The Department has planned for two areas of training, i.e. Management Skills Training and Professional Skills Training. Officers need to be trained in management and even financial accounting skills to enhance proper management of resources. The Professional Skills training is to develop skills and capacity of staff at all levels to ensure effective and efficient delivery of services.
4. **High Debt Level:** The Departments owes printers of *Boma Lathu*, *This Is Malawi* magazine and *Malawi Mail* in excess of K55 million versus an annual budget of K100 million.
5. **Lack or Inadequate Modern Equipment:** Technology has advanced but some of the equipment that is being used in the Audio Visual Section is out of date.
6. **High Vacancy Rate:** The Department has operated for more than 14 years with a vacancy rate of over 50 per cent. Although efforts have been made to fill vacancies through recruitment and promotions, the problem still persists. The hardest hit is MANA as most Districts have had no DIOs for a long time.
7. At Management level, there is supposed to be a Director, and three Deputy Directors. But over the years experience has been that there would be either a Director without Deputies or no Director or just one Deputy. Currently, there is no Director, (since January 2011), no Deputy Director responsible for Press and Publications (since May 2007) and no Deputy Director responsible Civic Education (since September 2010).

### **5.8.5. Future Plans**

1. Increase number of publications for circulation
2. Filling of all vacant posts
3. Acquire modern equipment for all Sections

### **5.8.6. Comments**

The following comments are based on interaction from the floor:

1. Request OPC to support Presidential (VVIP) events as used to be in the past so that DoI can be relieved of the debts that are accrued through such events.
2. MBC can train personnel of DoI. MBC can use MANA personnel for collection of stories both written and spoken. The GWAN can be used in future for transmission of news from the Districts to MBC and DoI.
3. Ministry HQRS has submitted its recommendations to OPC for filling of its vacant positions especially for the Civic Education Division.
4. MPC should make use of Civic Education Division for publicising its (MPC) services.
5. Members noted that some Ministries, including the MDPC, do not involve the Ministry of Information regarding information and dissemination on projects, programmes and initiatives. This was noted during the consultations on MGDS II. The Ministry should contact and discuss with MDPC on this.

## **6. CLOSING CEREMONY AND RESOLUTIONS**

A team composed of Mrs. G. Hiwa, Mr. W. Kamanga, Mrs. D. Mwawa, Mrs. G. Kubwalo and Mr. Z. Mankhambo prepared a draft Communiqué which was presented by Mrs. G. Hiwa. The Communiqué was discussed and adopted by all members present after amendments were incorporated.

**Annex 1** is the Communiqué, signed by Managers of Ministry Headquarters, MACRA, MBC, MPC, DISTMS, and DoI.