

● **YOUR EXCELLENCY CHEN SHUI-BIAN, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA;**

● **YOUR MAJESTY KING MSWATI III OF THE KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND;**

● **YOUR EXCELLENCIES HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT;**

● **LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.**

I am happy to address this 2007 TAIWAN–AFRICA PROGRESSIVE PARTNERSHIP FORUM that aims at strengthening the Africa–Taiwan partnership for sustainable development and prosperity for our countries.

I wish to emphasise at the onset that such mutual partnership is critical for sharing experiences in economic and social transformation, and hence in enhancing the welfare of our peoples.

I wish to indicate that Malawi’s cooperation with the Republic of China–Taiwan dates back to the time our country gained independence in 1965. Since then, the Republic of China–Taiwan has provided our country with financial and technical support in many key development programmes. These include Agriculture, Health, Infrastructure Development, and Capacity Building in information technology.

The theme of this forum, TOWARDS PROSPERITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT is timely and germane to Africa’s current strategic plans to move our countries out of poverty.

I would like to take this opportunity to share with you Malawi's developmental principles and strategies on the basis of which meaningful and mutually beneficial partnership can exist between Malawi and the Republic of China–Taiwan.

To begin with, Malawi's vision is to transform our country into an industrial one by adding value to our raw materials. We wish to become a manufacturing and exporting country rather than remaining a predominantly importing and consuming nation.

In order to achieve this we have selected top “priorities within priorities”. These include agriculture and food security; irrigation and water development; transport and communications infrastructure; energy; intergrated rural development; and prevention and management of HIV and AIDS and nutritional disorders.

These priorities are coordinated and interlinked in such a way that gains on one sector spill over impacting on other basic human needs such as health, economic growth, education, employment and trade.

Since agriculture remains the mainstay of our economy, Agriculture and Food Security is our top most priority. Within the last two years, this sector has made an impact in peoples' lives. Malawi has surplus produce for two consecutive years which we are currently exporting to other countries within the Southern Africa region. Key to this success was fertilizer, farm input subsidies and extension services. Malawi is positioning itself to be the breadwinner for the region.

The second top priority is Irrigation and Water Development. Under this, we are constructing multipurpose small to medium earth dams throughout the country. This would provide adequate water for irrigation, energy, aquaculture, as well as for domestic use.

In another area, the development of irrigation will reduce Malawi's dependence on rain-fed agriculture and enable diversification of the country's economy.

In the area of Transport and Communications Infrastructure we are emphasizing on construction of roads linking the urban and rural areas. This will create a conducive environment for investment opportunities.

A notable development in transport is the project to have access to the Indian Ocean through an already navigable waterway from the Port of Chinde in Mozambique through the Zambezi and Shire Rivers to the inland port of Nsanje in Malawi. This will make the cost of trading with Malawi more profitable and competitive.

The other top priority for Malawi is Energy Development. Modern industrialization demands reliable electricity. Similarly in construction, agro-processing and manufacturing, we need adequate supply of energy.

The fifth top priority for Malawi is Intergrated Rural Development. This will enhance growth and development, and prosperity among the rural communities. This takes a comprehensive approach to addressing poverty through infrastructure development such as good tarmac roads, piped water, electricity, police stations, banks, post offices, hospitals, secondary schools, community halls and building of industries.

The sixth top priority for Malawi is the Management and Prevention of HIV and AIDS. Malawi is making tremendous advancement in sensitization and distribution of ARVs to affected people. We also have a very successful voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) programme. Our programmes on prevention, treatment, impact mitigation for vulnerable societies such as orphans and the elderly is also supported by all people in Malawi. We plan to have industries and technologies that would assist in processing our food supplements such as groundnuts, beans, vegetables, fruits, to nutritious commodities that should be readily available for our people.

I wish to assure potential investors to Malawi that we have worked out a holistic security programme. We will guarantee security for the investment, investor, the business premises, and the home. We are also wiping out corruption. We are improving our economic management and interest rates are low, inflation rate is now at 7.2 per cent, and exchange rate is very stable.

Your Majesty

Your Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

In conclusion, I concur with the idea of searching for modalities for progressive partnership for prosperity and sustainable development. And I have put on the table various opportunities where we can consolidate and strengthen the Taiwan–Malawi partnership arrangements.

There are potential areas in trade development, in which opportunities abound for the Taiwanese private investors. The returns are very high indeed. There is a choice of manufacturing in cotton ginning and weaving, food processing, tea processing, tobacco processing, fertilizer production, infrastructure development, tourism such as hotels, wildlife, lakes, irrigation, energy and the integrated development for consideration. There are also windows of opportunity in the supply of health and pharmaceutical products and equipment, teaching and learning materials and in small to medium machine tools.

Malawi is the “Warm Heart of Africa” and I can assure you of a warm reception when you visit our country.

I thank you for your attention.