



## **Republic of Malawi**

### **Vice President of the Republic of Malawi**

#### **Profile**

#### **Dr. Michael Bizwick Usi**

The Current Vice President Right Honourable Dr. Michael Bizwick Usi was born on December 16, 1968. He attended primary school in Mulanje before being selected to Mulanje Secondary School in the same district. He then embarked on his tertiary education journey, earning a Diploma in Clinical Medicine from Malamulo Medical College. He completed a Bachelor's Degree in Administration with Andrews University (USA), obtained a Master's Degree in Strategic Planning from the University of Derby, a Master's Degree in International Development from Andrews University (USA), and a PhD in "Development of Strategy for Youth Development Through Education" from the University of Bedfordshire in the United Kingdom. An Adventist by faith, Dr. Usi is married and has two children.

#### **Professional Track Record**

Dr. Usi worked for the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Malawi for 26 years in various roles, rising to the position of Country Director. As Director, he was responsible for the organization's growth in program profiles ranging from education, HIV/AIDS, and youth empowerment.

Dr. Usi is a playwright and actor famously known for his role as "Dr. Manga" in the film Dr. Manga. In the absence of national TV in Malawi, he gained popularity through radio plays on MBC Radio 1. He began making feature films centered on topical issues in Malawi, reflecting the social and political realities facing Malawians. He was also the director of the MBC TV series Tikuferanji (Why Are We Dying).

He is involved in efforts to build the film industry in Malawi and constantly advocates for its growth. In 2005, Dr. Usi addressed the European Union Parliament as an expert in community development.

In 2010, he made an appearance at the Malawi Washington Association (MWA) Extravaganza 2010 Panel discussion hosted by the MWA at the Malawian Embassy in Washington, DC, where he discussed the history of the Malawian film industry and his ideas on its expansion. Among his

film works are:

### **1. Living on Perfume**

Filmed in 2009 on location in Malawi and Burundi, the film details conditions in Malawian prisons and the Malawian penal system. It also explores politics and love throughout its four episodes. The film features an international cast of Australian, British, Malawian, and Swedish actors. Local artists featured include Ruth Simika, Augustine Mauwa, Deus Sandramu, and Gift Namachekecha.

### **2. International Cook**

Filmed in 2010 on location in the Washington, DC metro area, this film tells the story of a man trying to settle in the US with a visitor's visa. It features Clare Johnson (American), Brendon Mitchell (American), and Albert Kazako (Malawian).

### **3. Tikuferanji (Why Are We Dying)**

A series that enlightens Malawians about HIV/AIDS and encourages healthy love and good sexual reproductive health. In 2008, Dr. Usi received an award for Outstanding Service to Youth Ministries Using Theatre from the West Central Africa Division, Nigeria.

### **Political Career**

On February 6, 2019, Dr. Usi joined mainstream politics when Dr. Saulos Klaus Chilima of UTM unveiled him as his running mate for the May 21 tripartite elections. Prior to this, Dr. Usi had established a popular semi-political movement called 'Odyza Zake Alibe Mlandu,' which promoted the philosophy of independence and self-sufficiency among Malawians.

Together with Dr. Chilima, they campaigned for office ahead of the 2019 tripartite elections and the 2020 presidential re-run, which they won in partnership with the Malawi Congress Party (MCP). In 2020, President Lazarus Chakwera appointed Dr. Usi as Minister of Tourism, Culture, and Wildlife.

### **Key Accomplishments at the Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Wildlife**

As Minister, Dr. Usi played a pivotal role in guiding the ministry in the conceptualization and development of bankable tourism projects aimed at turning Malawi into a bustling tourist destination. He ensured that the human capital at the Ministry aligned with the Malawi Vision 2063 development agenda. Under his guidance, the ministry facilitated the development of human capital in the tourism industry through investment in training programs at Mzuzu University and the Malawi Institute of Tourism (MIT). In April 2022, the ministry launched the National Tourism Investment Master Plan, a 20-year investment plan containing 104 projects in tourism hotspots, with 10 having undergone feasibility studies for implementation within 10

years.

Among his accomplishments, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Wildlife constructed a fence for the first military museum in the country, located in Zomba, and populated it with military artifacts. This project was made possible with funding from private financiers.

Under Dr. Usi, the Ministry set a world record by translocating the largest number of elephants in the world from Liwonde National Park to Kasungu National Park in 2022. He also implemented various programs to uplift the livelihoods of communities around national game parks, improving the population of game in wildlife conservation areas, and reducing human-animal conflicts.

Through the Copyright Society of Malawi (COSOMA), the Ministry pioneered the creation of the Artists Welfare Fund to support the welfare of artists in the country. The fund helps artists access money to fund their projects and assists them in times of need. The Ministry also worked to improve the earning of royalties by artists, encouraging innovation in their creative works.

The ministry created an enabling environment for artists, including the digitization of distribution platforms. COSOMA extended the payment of royalties to creators of traditional songs beyond those who sing using electric instruments. Dr. Usi's Ministry also introduced waivers for international visas to make Malawi competitive as a tourist destination. Additionally, the ministry introduced programs to ensure peaceful co-existence between communities and private beach owners along Lake Malawi.

Dr. Usi pioneered the commercialization of traditional dances, instilling pride among Malawians in their culture and ensuring that Malawians earn decent incomes by performing their traditional dances, promoting cultural tourism.

Other key accomplishments in the Ministry under Dr. Usi include the rehabilitation of the Blantyre Cultural Centre (formerly French Cultural Centre) and the digitization of archive processes such as record-keeping.

The welfare of workers in hotel units was also a focus through the opening of toll-free numbers for registering workplace complaints and strengthening the licensing regime for hotel operators in the country.

Under Usi, the Ministry launched the Chongoni Resource/Training Centre in Dedza and Malepe/Zoa Falls tourist attraction centers, attracting local and international tourists and improving the livelihoods of surrounding communities through training in various crafts.

### **His Vision/Plans for the Ministry of Natural Resources & Climate Change**

Malawi's pathway to economic growth is often disrupted by climate shocks, leaving millions trapped in a cycle of poverty for decades. Achieving key milestones on climate change is critical to the attainment of Malawi Vision 2063.

Dr. Usi's vision is to build a team of competent and passionate professionals at the Ministry, focused on aligning operations to Malawi Vision 2063.

He plans to undertake visible steps to jumpstart investments in climate-resilient infrastructure, halt land degradation and forest loss to improve carbon capture and agricultural productivity, and expand safety nets and economic diversification to reduce the number of vulnerable households.

Given Malawi's narrow fiscal space, the Ministry will seek additional financing from grants and new inflows from the private sector to fund various projects while minimizing transaction costs and finding new development approaches that do not increase public debt.

Dr. Usi aims to position Malawians in the driver's seat for conservation initiatives and limiting climate change's adverse effects. The desired outcome is for both rural and urban Malawians to benefit from these initiatives, with tree planting becoming a way of life.