



# **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Localization in Malawi**

## ***Voluntary Local Reviews***

Wild Ndipo- Mayor of Blantyre City

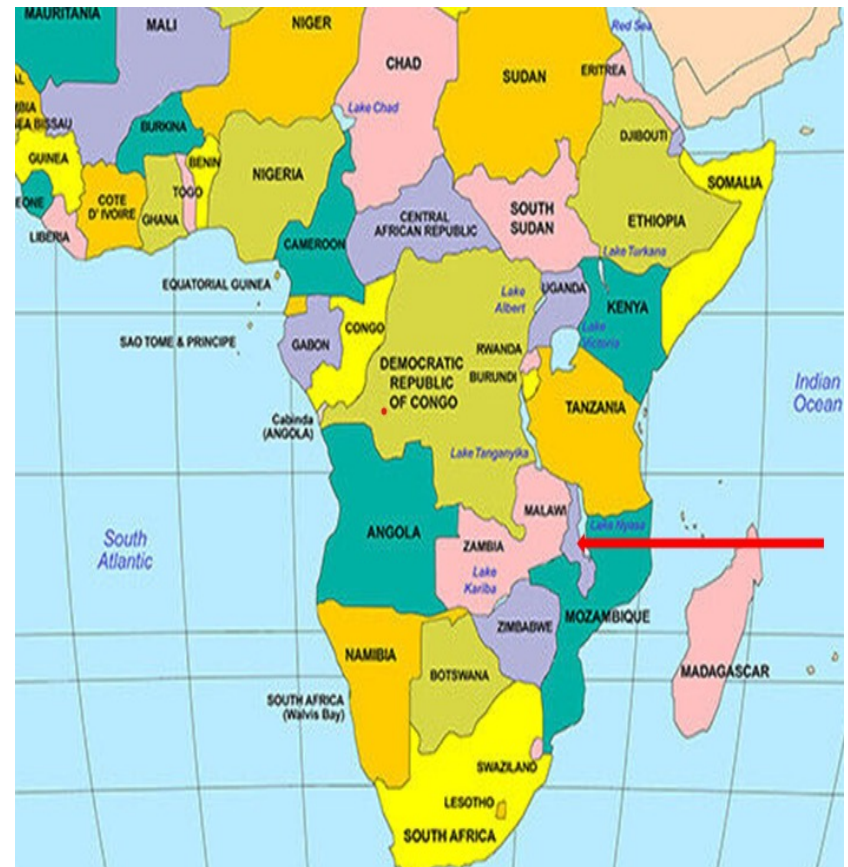
Heese Maclean Saulande Nyangu- Mayor of Kasungu City

Archangel Bakolo- CEO of Zomba City

[abakolo@zombacitycouncil.mw](mailto:abakolo@zombacitycouncil.mw)

# Malawi Profile

- Malawi is located in Southern Africa, shares its borders with Mozambique, Zambia, and Tanzania.
- The population is 21.41 million (est, 2023) with an annual growth rate of 2.6%
- The country has an urban population of 20% of its entire population, with an expected increase of 214,000 per annum during 2020-2025.
- Rapid urbanization has led to a pressing demand of services, housing, waste management, transportation etc.



## Key Guiding Questions

1. How have SDG Localization Champions engaged national leaders, stakeholders, including the community, private sector, and civil society, in the VLR process, and what strategies have been most successful?
2. What can be done to encourage more local and regional governments to undertake VLRs, and how can the process be made more accessible and beneficial for them?
3. What common challenges have cities and regions faced in the VLR process, and what innovative solutions have they implemented to overcome these challenges?

# 1. How have **SDG Localization Champions** engaged national leaders, stakeholders, including the community, private sector, and civil society, in the VLR process, and what strategies have been most successful?

- Malawi conducted a National Capacity Building Workshop on Improved Local and National Government Capacities for Localizing SDGs Through Voluntary Local Reviews in May this year (2024)
- Thanks to UNDESA for exceptional collaboration with Malawi Local Government Association (MALGA), UNOSD, UN Habitat and UNDP
- **The objective of the workshop** was to enhance local governments' capacities
  - a) to carry out and monitor their SDG implementation,
  - b) to initiate action to conduct the country's first series of voluntary local reviews (VLRs),
  - c) linking the VLRs to the VNR process to inform the country's midpoint review on national SDG progress.

# Successes on SDG Localization and VLRs

## Success 1: National Capacity Building Workshop on Improved Local and National Government Capacities for Localizing SDGs Through Voluntary Local Reviews

- This multi-stakeholder workshop brought together, Government Agencies, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), community groups and leaders, Private Sector, UN agencies, Academia and Research Institutions
- Delegates from other countries shared their National Voluntary Reviews (NVR) experiences, challenges, and lessons learned. And this promoted peer learning in accelerating SDG implementation.

### **The workshop assisted to**

- a) Build capacities for localizing SDGs
- b) Improve capacities for Voluntary Local Reviews
- c) Enhance national strategy progress
- d) Strengthen local and national government collaboration
- e) Advance SDG achievement in Malawi

## **Success 2: Local governments developed Road Roadmaps for VLRs**

- Local governments developed roadmaps for VLR
- Stakeholder mapping- mapping the stakeholders to be involved in the VLRs

### **What strategies have been most successful?**

- a) Alignment of national and district development plans to the SDGs
- b) Alignment of National M&E framework and performance measures

### **3. What can be done to encourage more local and regional governments to undertake VLRs, and how can the process be made more accessible and beneficial for them?**

- a) Foster integration SDGs into Urban Development Plans. This will ensure institutionalization and sustainability
  - *Prioritized SDGs will form part of the development plans*
  - *SDGs will form part of the budget- allocated resources*
  - *Part of the performance measures*
  
- b) Development of the UDP is a consultative process. It entails engaging various stakeholders at ward/community and city council level. This guarantees ownership of the development processes. Promoting a bottom-up approach to development
  
- c) Raising public awareness on the SDGs through social accountability mechanisms- such citizen budgets, town hall meetings etc

## Opportunities for VLR in Malawi

1. Great optimism, commitment and passion towards SDGs localization
2. Integration of prioritized SDGs into Urban Development Plans is a low hanging fruit to sustain the efforts
3. Development of the UDP is a consultative process. It entails mutli-stakeholder engagement at various level ward/community and city levels
4. Availability of human resources to facilitate and coordinate the VLRs
  - *Formation of project teams*
  - *Prioritization of SDGs in local councils e.g. Zomba- Un Habitat Urban resilience program*
  - *Awareness raising of SDG to make people take ownership of VLRs*
5. Availability of data on some SDGs e.g. education – collaborate with other sectors



### **3. What common challenges have cities and regions faced in the VLR process, and what innovative solutions have they implemented to overcome these challenges?**

- a) Financing gap in implementing the SDG localization plans
  - Solution- integration of SDGs in Local government development plans and budgets. However this requires resources which are not available. Local governments development roadmaps which they cannot implement without resources
  
- b) Scarcity of stakeholders to complement Council plans to implement some SDGs
  - Solution- strengthen collaboration with other sectors
  
- c) Data management and analysis is affected by
  - Poor IT infrastructure
  - Lack of standardization of data collection tools affect data comparability

Solution- digitizing standardized tools