



# African Gender, Climate Change and Agriculture Support Program (GCCASP)

Malawi National Desk Review

A program of the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency in collaboration with the Government of Malawi

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADC	Area Development Committee
AEC	Area Development Committee
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ASWAp	Agriculture Sector Wide Approach Programme
AU	African Union
CA	Conservation Agriculture
CAADP	Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme
CC	Circle Committee
DA	District Assembly
DEC	District Executive Committee
DPMT	District Programme Management Team
FIDP	Farm Income Diversification Programme
FISP	Farm Inputs Subsidy Programme
GCCASP	African Gender, Climate Change and Agriculture Support Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
Ha	Hectare
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IRLADP	Irrigation, Rural Livelihoods and Agricultural Development Project
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MHDS	Malawi Demographic and Health Survey
MOAFS	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
MVP	Millennium Villages Project
NAPA	National Adaptation and Programmes of Action
NASFAM	National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NGP	National Gender Policy
NPCA	NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency
NSO	National Statistical Office
PMC	Project Management Committee
RBM	Reserve Bank of Malawi
RLSP	Rural Livelihoods Support Programme
TV	Television
VAG	Village Action Group
VAP	Village Action Plan
VDC	Village Development Committee

## 2. Introduction

According to the terms of reference, this inception report aims at reviewing gender equality and policies that create conducive environments for equitable participation of women in agriculture. Specifically the report:

- ✓ Reviews the CAADP investment plan and other agricultural initiatives and appraise the extent to which these incorporate women-specific investments;
- ✓ Reviews and appraises the inclusion of women-specific technical support activities in national policy and programme documents related to agriculture, environment and climate change;
- ✓ Reviews the existence of any climate smart agriculture and gender programmes that have been implemented at national level and identify lessons from any such programmes for up-scaling.

However, before this is tackled, the report provides the background situation, profiling the economic situation and current gender issues in the country.

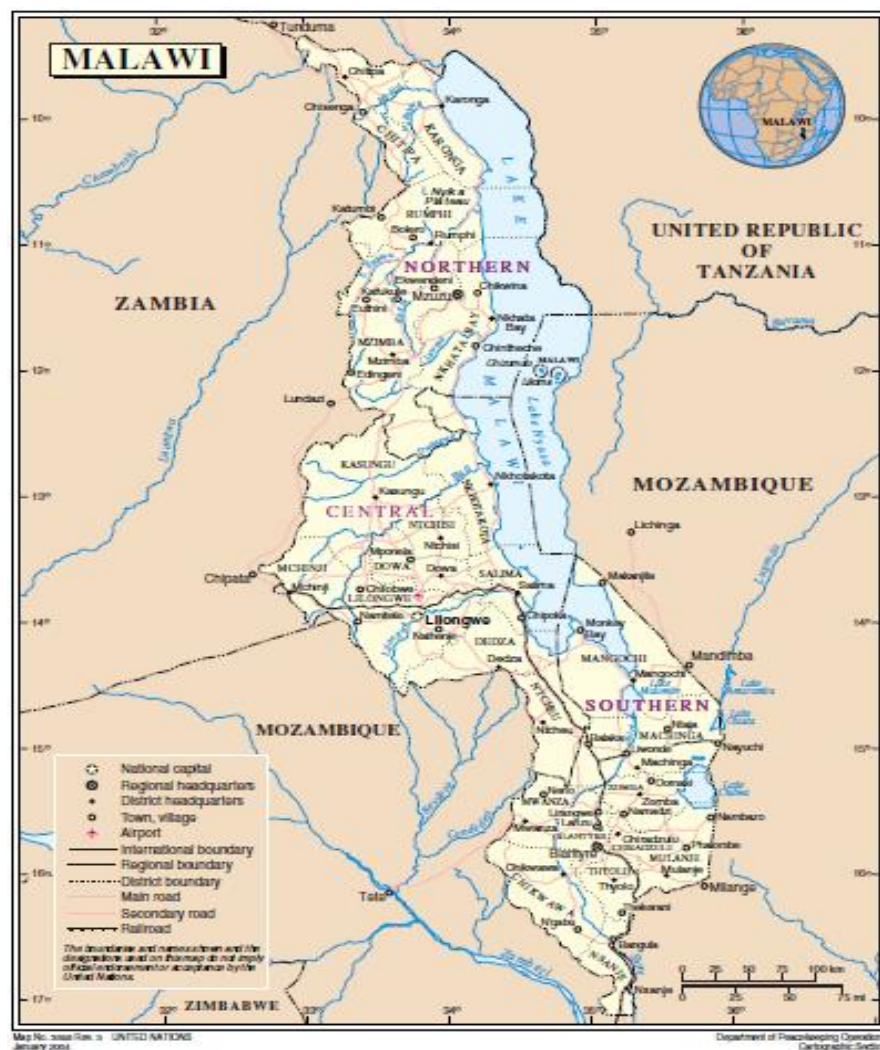
## 3. Background Situation

In recognition of the critical role of women in agriculture and the differential impacts of climate change, the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA) is designing a five-year programme on *'Gender and Climate – Smart Agriculture Support Programme in Africa'*, with support from the Norwegian Government. The aim of the programme is to support implementation of regional and country interventions to empower rural women and other vulnerable sections of communities to better cope with the adverse impacts of climate change. In this regard, it was imperative for NEPAD to have a clear understanding of the country related specific issues impacting rural women farmer's ability to engage in the agricultural sector in a more productive and profitable manner

To this effect, the NEPAD Agency, enlisted GeoSAS, an Ethiopia-based consulting firm to facilitate national consultations on gender, climate change and agriculture in five selected African countries including Malawi. Each of the selected countries conducted a desk review on policy and strategic documents; an in-depth assessment and primary data collection and a national consultation two days workshop. The national-level findings will provide inputs into the continental level consultations. Overall, the findings from these consultations will feed into the design of the *AU/NEPAD Gender and Climate – Smart Agriculture Support Programme*.

This report presents the findings from the consultations in Malawi, which is a land locked country bordered by Tanzania to the east; Zambia to the west and the rest of the land by Mozambique. It has a population of approximately 15 million inhabitants on 120,000 square km of land. Lake Malawi covers almost a third of the country (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Map of Malawi



This section provides an overview of the economic situation of Malawi and builds a profile of the status of poverty and its characteristics.

## 2.1 Economic Situation

The country's macroeconomic performance during 2010 declined significantly compared to the past two years (2008 and 2009). Malawi registered a real GDP average growth of 4.3 percent in 2011 from 6.7 in 2010, 8.9 in 2009, and 8.3 percent in 2008 (Reserve Bank of Malawi, 2012). Reserve Bank of Malawi (RBM) estimated that real GDP in 2012 will grow by 4.3 percent. The impressive macroeconomic performance registered from 2005 to 2009 however resulted in excess demand for goods and services, leading to high demand for imports particularly in 2010-2011. In addition, the country experienced low prices for tobacco, a major foreign exchange earner as well as a decline in development aid. The combined situation has caused serious foreign exchange shortages, which has adversely affected economic activities. There were also persistent fuel shortages and power cuts. Malawi has therefore seen an increase in prices for both food and non-food products in 2011 which pushed the general rise in prices (Nation Newspaper, 2012). This resulted in a rise in average annual inflation rate of 7.6 up from 7.4 in 2010. Inflation rate reached 10.9 in the



first quarter of 2012. These events inevitably slowed down economic growth in 2011 and 2012 compared to 2010 fiscal year, which has adversely affected the livelihoods of the rural poor in general and the smallholder farmers in particular. Within the smallholder subsector, women and children are the most vulnerable. This trend is unlikely to reverse soon.

Agriculture remains the major driver of economic growth contributes about 39 percent of the total GDP. The sector employs about 80 per cent of the workforce and it contributes over 80 per cent of foreign exchange earnings. It contributes significantly to national and household food security. More than 85 percent of rural households derive their livelihoods from agriculture. Due to the slowdown in economic growth in 2011, agricultural activities also slowed down during the 2011/2012 season and are expected to register a growth of 4.1 in 2012 from 6.7 in 2011 (Reserve Bank of Malawi, 2012). This is mainly due to a decline in tobacco production following low prices fetched in 2011. Maize production is also estimated to drop as a result of the late onset of rains and localised dry spells. Within the agriculture sector, women provide 70 percent of the workforce and produce 80 percent of food for home consumption (Ministry of Agriculture, 2012). However, as it will be noted below, gender disparities and HIV issues are among the major constraints that affect its contribution to sustainable development in the country.

## 2.2 Poverty Situation

Malawi has registered notable success in poverty reduction in the past five years from 52% in 2004 to 39% in 2009 (Malawi Government, 2011). However, poverty is still widespread involving a cross section of the population and country. The proportion of people living in poverty and those suffering from hunger is highest in rural areas than in urban areas – a person in a rural area is three times as likely to be poor. According to National Statistical Office (NSO, 2005)), rural poverty is characterized by a number of factors, including gender of household, household size, education of household head, access to markets and financial services, presence of a cash crop and recurrence of shocks, among others.

Overall, women head about 25 percent of the households in Malawi and they are disproportionately poor (NSO, 2005 and 2009). Fifty-one percent of the people in male-headed households are poor while 59 percent of people in female-headed households are poor. Thus people who live in female headed households are poorer than people in male headed households. About 55 percent of people in male-headed households in the rural areas are poor compared to 60 percent those who reside in female-headed households.

Education of the household head is also highly correlated with poverty status. Poverty is more severe among people who live in households whose heads have no formal education qualification; and those with more than a junior certificate of education are significantly less likely to live in poverty. The national adult literacy rate is low at 70 percent up from 65 in 2005. Female literacy rate is lower than national average at 60 percent, compared to male literacy, 79 percent. The poor education levels limit the chances of rural people to enter into non-farm employment and the ability of farmers to take farming as a business, which requires literacy and improved management skills.

Access to markets and services: Limited access to markets and services is another constraint. The poor tend to live in remote areas with few roads and means of transport, which limits their economic opportunities. Access to financial services is severely limited. Only 12 per cent of households have access to credit and access is especially difficult for smallholder farmers and women in particular.

The rural poor are unable to diversify out of agriculture due to limited economic opportunities. Yet, as we note below, agriculture is highly vulnerable to climate hazards such as intense rainfall, floods, seasonal droughts, droughts, dry spells, cold spells, landslides, and mudslide. Poor households therefore resort to undesirable coping strategies such as selling assets, firewood, local brew, fish, charcoal; handouts such as seed, fertiliser and pesticides; reducing food consumption; and getting some assistance in terms of money, food and clothes from relatives working in the towns.

#### 4. Gender Issues in Agriculture

This section reviews the current gender issues and identifies gaps in information.

##### 3.1 Role of women in agriculture.

About 88 percent of rural women are employed in the agricultural sector as smallholder farmers, compared with 73 per cent of rural men (NSO, 2009). More women than men are full time farmers and this is reflected in village meetings, where more women than men attend. They work as much as men on the farm, with minimal differences in farming activities such as land preparation, planting, weeding, harvesting, grading, curing, packaging and marketing (NSO, 2009). Women participate fully in both cash and food crops; and their contribution to food and nutrition security is considerable. They are the major growers of staple foods such as maize, rice, sweet potatoes, potato, sorghum, plantains and cassava; and other food crops including grain legumes, fruits and vegetables. Women care for all important small livestock - poultry, goats, sheep and pigs. As it will be noted below, these are the most important animals in Malawi. Women also participate in spraying crops against pests particularly in areas where cotton is grown and their children are at risk on food chain when it comes to the pesticides getting into breasts.

In addition to the work on the farm, women are responsible for most domestic work. For example NSO (2009) reports that 75 percent of females were engaged in fetching firewood as compared to 33 percent for males; 88 percent of females were engaged in fetching water as compared to 45 percent for males and about 53 percent of females did care for the sick while for males it was 40 percent. The gravity of these tasks is being exacerbated by the recurrent droughts and floods associated with climate change and the advent of HIV&AIDS. Most women are therefore overburdened by a heavy workload, and require labour saving technologies and practices. The extent to which these are being promoted in projects and programmes in the agriculture sector is not clear despite the policy on gender mainstreaming as it will noted below. This is largely because implementation does not adequately address the major constraints to enhancing the important role of women in agriculture. Planned interventions should target both men and women and put in place mechanisms to ensure the participation of different gender categories with particular attention to empower women. Another reason is that monitoring and evaluation data is often not disaggregated by sex all through the different levels. Usually there are gaps and it is difficult to get a complete picture. Gender disaggregation is evident at village level but when data is compiled at different levels up to the Ministry headquarters, we tend to lose the gender disaggregated data in the process.

However, despite their contribution to the country's agricultural production, there is disparity between men and women in access and control of agriculture production resources and services.



### 3.2 Women heads of household

About one quarter of households are headed by women who are divorced, unmarried, widowed, in a polygamous marriage or de facto heads while their husbands work away from home. Women heads of household tend to be younger and less educated than their male counterparts. Their households have fewer assets, limited access to inputs, more dependants, and longer periods of food insecurity. They are likely to be poorer than male headed households, a situation which may force them to engage in sex for food to feed the children. Women heads of household therefore deserve special attention. There are variations in the number of female headed households in the regions and districts. The number is more likely above the national average in southern and lakeshore districts and decreases as you go to the northern region.

### 3.3 Ownership and access to land

Ownership of and access to land is important in providing a sustainable livelihood in rural areas. While both men and women have access to land, ownership varies from place to place depending on family system of inheritance and succession (matrilineal or patrilineal) (Esser, et al., 2005). The two family systems differ in terms of the line of inheritance rights followed, which has gender implications. In the matrilineal system, the inheritance rights are through the female line. A woman might inherit land from her mother or grandmother. Women in the matrilineal societies (common in the central and southern regions of Malawi) have influence on major decisions such as the selection of chiefs and use of land, although the man still remains the head of household. When she marries, her husband comes to live with her, and together they till the land. In the case of divorce, the husband leaves the village and the woman and her children continue to cultivate the land. If the wife dies, the husband leaves the village leaving the children behind. The husband obtains the right to cultivate the land through his maternal line. Basically, the opposite is true in the patrilineal system. The man inherits land from his father or grandfather. When he marries, he stays in his village. In the case of divorce, his wife loses custody and her right to cultivate this land and returns to her own village.

However, these descriptions oversimplify the complexities of the two systems (Esser, et al., 2005). For example, both systems recognise the man as the head of household and therefore the main decision maker. The culture in both systems expects the men to make all the major decisions in a household with or without consultation with their wives. Furthermore, the brothers and uncles in the matrilineal system assume a greater responsibility over the women in their family or clan regardless of their marital status. This implies that the decision and control over land and inheritance in both systems is usually in the hands of the male members. As Sigman (1992) found out, the impact of these two systems on women's agricultural productivity does not seem to be very different. The important factor is the woman's marital status. Female household heads make almost all decisions in their household. While women in male-headed households may make decisions alone, it is more common either for husbands to make the decisions alone or for husbands and wives to make decisions together. There is more security for the female partner in the matrilineal system because the woman is cultivating her land, in her own village, and amongst her own people (Hirschman and Vaughan, 1984; Sigman, 1992). In addition, she will have support from her own relatives, which is important in view of the high child dependency ratio. Although the two family systems of inheritance appear distinct, in practice there are variations particularly in the centre and south in which the matrilineal

system dominates. It is not uncommon for men to take their wives to their own villages. In such situations, the women tend to lose the support they enjoyed in their home villages.

In general, it is increasingly accepted that both systems are not perfect. Both men and women are experiencing problems as long as they do not have the right to cultivate the land. When men and women do not own the land they cultivate, they tend to hesitate to make major investments on it. This may have implications for long term climate smart agricultural interventions such as conservation agriculture and tree planting. With the increasing number of deaths largely due to the HIV&AIDS pandemic, it is increasingly difficult for land to devolve to surviving spouse and to children whether male or female. The challenge is to ensure equitable distribution of land for both men and women in both systems of marriages as the draft land policy stipulates. However, the land policy has been in a draft form for more than five years due to other contentious issues and so the disparities continue.

### 3.4 Access to and control of agricultural production resources and extension service

There is disparity between men and women in access and control of agriculture production resources and services. For example, fewer women (14%) than men (18%) access extension services; and average land holding size for female headed households is lower (0.803 ha) than that (1.031ha) of male headed household (Malawi Government, 2007). Grabbing of agricultural related property such as land, oxen, ploughs, inputs, and maize fields after the death of male spouse by relatives of the bereaved, is another gender issue that contributes to poverty. This suggests that any interventions in GCCASP should develop strategies to deliberately target its extension activities to women. At the same time, men have to be involved because for the women to participate actively, they need the authority from the men.

### 3.5 Access to and control of credit and inputs

The most important extension messages in Malawi concern the use of improved varieties of maize and the use of fertiliser. Most farmers are aware of their importance but fail to take full advantage of them due to inadequate knowledge and skills and access to cash or credit to purchase the inputs. Although it is difficult for most smallholders to access credit, it is harder for women than men. Most of the credit is offered to facilitate the production of cash crops such as tobacco and cotton, which is typically the domain of men. For sustainable agriculture techniques that require access to inputs, the planned GCCASP should enable both men and women to participate.

### 3.6 Participation in decision making

The participation of women in decision-making in the agriculture sector is limited as the process is dominated by men (MOAFS, 2012). For example, the 2004 Malawi Demographic and Health Survey (MHDS) shows that in 64 percent of married women, husbands make decisions on daily household purchases (as cited in Ministry of Agriculture 2012). Even at institutional level, most organizations are headed by males, for example by August 2011 in the Ministry of Agriculture there were 42 males against 10 females in decision making positions and Bunda College of Agriculture of the University of Malawi had 31 males against 5 females. As noted above, Illiteracy levels are higher for women than for men and this limits their participation in decision making positions and therefore not able to influence the agricultural agenda. As such, their special needs and interests in agriculture are often unmet, which limits their opportunities to economic empowerment.

Among the fisher folk, more women are involved in agricultural production than men who are mostly involved in fishing which results in labour shortage for agricultural production. Women also have limited access to agricultural markets due to lack of transport, technology and price negotiation skills. Men dominate in the commercial sub-sector which gives them an economic advantage over women (Malawi Government, 2007). When it comes to sales of cotton and tobacco and other higher revenue crops, men are in the forefront collecting money leaving the women and children helpless. Field Days promote interaction among farmers and technicians from the public and private sector where women and men participate as seen in the picture below.



### 3.7 The youth – an emerging gender category

The majority of households are headed by a person aged from 25-49, which is the most economically active group, with only 4 percent headed by a person less than 20 years. However, 27 percent of the households are headed by a youthful group of 25-34 years old, which according to observation is an emerging gender category that deserves attention. This group is said to have higher literacy level and is business oriented in both agricultural and off-farm enterprises. It appears to welcome technologies that would help them generate better income and find the traditional extension service as not responsive to their needs. This suggests that there is need to include interventions that would attract the youthful women generating such as income activities.

As it will be noted mainstreaming is agricultural gender disparities largely because does not address the major



Mandera cup G/Nut drying method  
Lead-farmer fieldday Chitedze

suggests that there are interventions that youthful women generating

below, gender central to most programmes but persist. This is implementation adequately constraints to

enhancing the important role of women in agriculture and climate change. GCCASP should therefore target both men and women and put in place mechanisms to ensure the participation of both genders with particular attention to empower women in all interventions.

## 5. Policy and Institutional Framework

This section reviews the institutional context in terms of national policies and strategies in general and agriculture, gender and climate change policies in particular.

### 4.1 The Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)

The Malawi CAADP Compact was signed by the Government, development partners and other stakeholders on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2010, and commits all partners to support the Agriculture Sector Wide Approach Programme (ASWAp), within the CAADP framework. The CAADP/ASWAp envisages a single comprehensive programme and budget framework, and a formalised process for better coordination between the Government and donors. The CAADP makes reference to gender only through the ASWAp which is its main vehicle for implementation.

### 4.2 The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS)

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Malawi are domesticated through the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS). It is the overarching medium term strategy aimed at reducing poverty in Malawi through sustainable economic growth and infrastructure development. The first phase of the strategy was implemented from 2006/7 to 2010/11 fiscal years. Second phase document (MGDS II) which has not yet been launched, covers the period 2011 through 2016.

The MGDS II has identified six broad thematic areas, namely: sustainable economic growth; social development; social support and disaster risk management, infrastructure development; governance; and gender and capacity development. From these broad themes, the MGDS emphasises on nine key priority areas that which are central to the achievement of sustainable economic growth and wealth creation. These are: Agriculture and Food Security; Energy, Industrial Development, Mining and Tourism; Transport Infrastructure and Nsanje World Inland Port; Education Science and Technology; Public Health, Sanitation, Malaria and HIV and AIDS Management; Integrated Rural Development; Green Belt Irrigation and Water Development; Child Development, Youth Development and Empowerment; and Climate Change, Natural Resources and Environmental Management. Through these priority areas, the MGDS is expected to maintain a balance among economic, social and environmental components of the economy. Eventually, this will facilitate attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. MDGs are also implemented directly by Millennium Villages Project (MVP) in two districts of Zomba and Mchinji in Malawi where all the 8 MDGs are implemented to more than 40,000 households and positive impacts are shown.

The strategy isolates agriculture as key to food security, economic growth and wealth creation. The goal in this priority is to increase agricultural productivity, diversification and food security by i) providing effective extension services; enhancing livestock and fisheries

productivity; improving access to inputs; promoting contract farming arrangements and irrigation farming; and promoting wide range of agricultural products for exports. These strategic objectives are expected to be achieved through the Agriculture Sector Wide Approach (ASWAp), which is a harmonised approach to programme implementation in the sector. The MVP now aims at scaling up business and formation of co-operatives to create wealth by reducing dependence syndrome.

The emphasis in climate change management as a priority area is to enhance resilience to climate change risks and impacts through the following strategies: improving weather and climate monitoring, prediction systems and databases; mainstreaming climate change issues in sectoral policies, plans and programmes; reducing emission of green house gasses; developing adaptation and mitigation measures to climate change related impacts; and enhancing capacity for resource mobilisation from bilateral, multilateral and other international donors. With climate change, rainfall is scarce and erratic, consequently, water table goes down and boreholes, boreholes, rivers and natural springs dry and women tend to travel long distances to fetch water for domestic and construction use.

The MGDS II recognizes gender and capacity building as a theme, isolating them from other crosscutting issues such as research and development, nutrition, HIV&AIDS and climate change that impact all sectors. This is because the MDGs report has noted that the MDGs targets that are lagging behind have very pronounced gender connotations<sup>1</sup>. Some of the challenges cited are lack of clear strategies to address gender disparities in most sector plans, lack of gender disaggregated data, and poor commitment to resource allocation towards gender mainstreaming activities. Despite these challenges, the MGDS reports the following notable achievements: increase in the proportion of women in the National Assembly from 14 percent in 2004 to 22 percent in 2009, increased number of women in decision making position in public service (State President and women Principal Secretaries and Heads of Department), the establishment of victim support units, and an almost gender parity status at primary school.

The goal of the gender sub-theme is to reduce gender inequalities and enhance participation of all gender groups in socio-economic development. A number of strategies have therefore been specified for reducing the gender inequalities, which include: promoting women entrepreneurship and involvement in cooperatives; promoting equal access to appropriate technologies and micro-finance schemes; advocating for affirmative action to increase representation of women in politics and decision making positions; strengthening Gender Based Violence (GBV) service delivery systems; strengthening legal and regulatory framework; and mainstreaming gender at all levels. Expected medium term outcomes are as follows: increased meaningful participation of all gender groups in decision making; wealth creation and poverty reduction; reduced gender based violence at all levels; and enhanced gender mainstreaming across all sectors. The expected outcomes include: increased participation of all gender groups in decision making; wealth creation and poverty reduction;

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<sup>1</sup> The gender related MDGs where expectations are not being met are: MDG 2 (universal education); MDG 3 (gender equality and women's empowerment); and MDG 5 (maternal health).

reduced gender based violence at all levels; and enhanced gender mainstreaming across all sectors. The MGDS is silent on the specific performance of the agricultural sector in terms of gender despite its importance in Malawi, suggesting that this is not clear – no available data that is disaggregated by gender.

#### 4.3 The Agriculture Sector Wide Approach (ASWAp)

The ASWAp is Malawi's national agricultural development and food security strategy that is aligned to the CAADP pillars and the MGDS. It offers a strategy for increasing agricultural productivity, food security and the contribution to economic growth. The ASWAp is a harmonised framework for agricultural development that has targeted three focus areas, two key support services and two cross-cutting issues. The focus areas are i) food security and risk management, ii) commercial agriculture, agro-processing and market development and iii) sustainable management of land and water. The key support services are i) technology generation and dissemination and ii) institutional strengthening and capacity building while the cross-cutting issues are i) HIV prevention and AIDS impact mitigation and ii) gender equity and empowerment.

The ASWAp has mainstreamed gender issues in order to reduce gender disparities and enhance capacity of the youth, women and men to contribute to agricultural productivity. In addition, it has mainstreamed HIV&AIDS issues to minimize morbidity and mortality attrition, enhance resilience and household coping mechanisms and also reduce HIV infection risks and vulnerability. The document has clearly outlined both gender and HIV&AIDS issues as they relate to household food and income security as well as research and extension services. It has also outlined some action points for addressing the situation.

The importance of climate change is taken into account in the ASWAp. The document clearly spells out the climate change issues and recognises that women (particularly female household heads), children, the youth and elderly are most vulnerable. The possible interventions to mitigate the effects of climate change have been included in the focus areas of the ASWAp.

#### 4.4 Agriculture Sector Gender, HIV and AIDS Strategy: 2012-2017

Based on the above gender issues in agriculture, as well as the impact of HIV&AIDS, the Ministry of Agriculture has developed the above strategy. The Ministry has aligned the strategy with the MDGs, ASWAp and MGDS. Its purpose is to promote gender equality, prevent the spread of HIV and mitigate the impacts of AIDS in order to increase agricultural productivity in line with ASWAp priorities. The strategy has three strategic pillars namely i) quality participation of women and other vulnerable gender categories in ASWAp focus areas and key support services ii) gender, HIV&AIDS responsive technology generation and dissemination and iii) effective coordination, capacity building and resource mobilization.

#### 4.5 The Draft National Gender Policy (NGP)

The overall goal of the draft NGP 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. The Draft NGP notes that “gender inequalities still exist and are deeply rooted in society due to historic patriarchal values that have continuously put women at a disadvantage”. The NGP recognizes the challenges faced in addressing gender issues including poor linkages between the National Gender Machinery and other sectors, lack of harmonization and coordination of national policies, lack of guidelines and technical know-how to mainstream gender at programme and institutional levels and uncoordinated efforts in gender initiatives among partner organizations. In the agriculture sector, the draft NGP emphasizes that women provide the majority of labour, but most of them do not take full control over the use and ownership of agricultural land and related assets. At the same time, women’s access to credit is still low at between 10% and 15%. Even in the cases where women have accessed credit, the control over its use usually rests with men within the households. The draft NGP seeks to achieve the following broad objectives:

- 1) To increase access to quality education for girls and boys;
- 2) To ensure gender concerns are addressed throughout the health sector;
- 3) To ensure gender issues are mainstreamed throughout all activities relating to HIV and AIDS;
- 4) To strengthen gender mainstreaming in the agriculture, food and nutrition security sectors;
- 5) To strengthen gender mainstreaming in the natural resources and environmental sector to achieve equality and sustainable environmental development;
- 6) To reduce poverty among women and other vulnerable groups through economic empowerment;
- 7) To promote women’s participation in politics and decision-making;
- 8) To eliminate gender based violence from the Malawian society; and
- 9) To strengthen the capacity of the National Gender Machinery.

#### 4.6 The National Adaptation and Programmes of Action (NAPA)

Malawi developed its NAPA in 2006 by evaluating the impacts of adverse climatic conditions in eight important sectors of economic growth, namely: agriculture, water, human health, energy, fisheries, wildlife, forestry and gender. Within the agriculture sector, the NAPA identifies Malawi’s dependency on rain-fed agriculture, frequent droughts and floods as the major climate change risks which result in poor crop yields or total crop failure, leading to serious food shortages, hunger and malnutrition and no feed for livestock. It isolates rural communities, especially women, children, female-headed households and the elderly as the most vulnerable groups. The proposed interventions include: (i) improved early warning systems (ii) recommended improved crop varieties, (iii) recommended improved livestock breeds, and (iv) improved crop and livestock management practices.



In the gender sector, the NAPA acknowledges that women bear most of the burden in activities that are most impacted by adverse climate, including collection of water, firewood and ensuring daily access to food. This burden is exacerbated by the changing demographics as a result of the impacts of the HIV and AIDS epidemic, leading to women taking up greater responsibilities as sole heads of households and taking care of the sick and orphans. A number of interventions were proposed that target women in highly vulnerable situations, including: (i) empowerment of women through access to microfinance to diversify earning potential, (ii) ensuring easier access to water and energy sources by drilling boreholes and planting trees in woodlots, and (iii) use of electricity provided through the rural electrification programme. MVP is providing energy in form of electricity in the two sites and also tree planting for future harvesting of firewood.

The NAPA was therefore developed to enable Malawi address her urgent and immediate adaptation needs caused by climate change and extreme weather events. Specifically, the document (i) identified a list of priority activities, (ii) formulated priority adaptation options, (iii) built capacity for adapting to longer-term climate change and variability, and (iv) raised public awareness on the urgency to adapt to the adverse effects of extreme weather events.

Fifteen priority adaptation options were identified in the NAPA from the eight sectors to address the urgent adaptation needs, with emphasis on vulnerable rural communities of Malawi that include:

- Sustaining life and livelihoods for the most vulnerable communities,
- Increasing resilience of food production systems to erratic rains by promoting sustainable production of maize and vegetables in wetlands and along river valleys;
- and
- Developing technologies to mitigate climate change,

## **6. Climate Smart Agriculture and Gender Programmes**

With the gender mainstreaming strategy adopted by Malawi in its national policies (MGDS, ASWAp, and others as noted above) a number of programmes and projects have been implemented that respond to climate smart agriculture and gender. This section briefly describes some of the notable ones.

### **5.1 The Farm Inputs Subsidy Programme (FISP)**

The Farm Inputs Subsidy Programme (FISP) was introduced in the 2005/06 growing season aimed at increasing food security at household and national levels. Specifically, the programme aims at increasing the smallholder farmer access to improved farm inputs and adoption of improved technologies in maize production systems. Natural disasters, high input prices due to high transport costs, high levels of poverty and low output prices among other factors often times limit the smallholder farmer's capacity to access inputs for increasing production.

The FISP has been successful in dramatically improving the food security situation for the country after close to two decades of consistent chronic food shortages despite several interventions to remedy the situation. Since its introduction, the country has consistently enjoyed substantial maize surplus over and above its annual national food requirements

estimated at 2.5 million metric tons. In the 2006/07 growing season, for instance, the country achieved a 53% surplus from a 43% national food deficit in 2005, some of which was exported to neighbouring countries. The overall production in the 2009/10 growing season was estimated at 3.4 million metric tons. This exceeded the national annual food requirement by 900 thousand metric tons although this was estimated to be lower than the 2008/09 production levels by 21%. FISP is now an established pillar of the Ministry's investment programme.

Among the major criticisms of FISP are its cost and targeting issues (Chinsinga and Mthinda, 2011). The cost of the programme is very high (more than 70% of MOAFS budget) and limits the government's capacity to invest in extension and research services needed to ensure optimal use of the inputs. As a result, the programme provides access to improved seeds and fertilisers, but does little to promote their efficient and effective use. In addition, the programme has been marred with logistical and targeting issues associated with the scale and geographical coverage of the programme (since it covers the whole country) as well as the need for timely inputs. To facilitate targeting, the Ministry issues guidelines at the start of the agricultural season. For example, the criteria for beneficiary identification in the 2010/2011 FISP guidelines included the following:

- A resource poor Malawian and resident in a village that owns a piece of land.
- People belonging to the following categories considered as vulnerable groups.
- Elderly resource poor household heads.
- HIV positive resource poor household head with proof of status.
- Resource poor female headed household head.
- Resource poor orphan headed household.
- Resource poor physically challenged headed household head.
- Resource poor household heads looking after elderly and physically challenged.

Where the beneficiary selection procedures are not transparent, the distribution of inputs has tended to favour the more food-secure households rather than vice versa. The programme could be improved by more investment in extension service and close monitoring of the beneficiary identification process. This could be possible if the scale and geographical area are reduced. In other words, a more focused approach is advisable.

## **5.2 Rural Livelihoods Support Programme (RLSP)**

The primary goal of the nine year (2003-2012) Rural Livelihoods Support Programme (RLSP) is to sustainably reduce poverty of the target group of approximately 50,000 households in Nsanje, Thyolo and Chiradzulu districts through investments in human capital, in food production and income generating activities. Funded by IFAD and Malawi Government through the Ministry of Local Government investment programme, the RLSP has three specific objectives: (i) empower the poor and vulnerable through development of institutional human resource capacities for community development, management and local governance; (ii) support target groups in self-selected food security and income-generating activities based on agriculture and livestock; and (iii) efficient and effective programme management and coordination. RLSP was particularly successful in targeting poor households with a focus on women, youth and the economically active through

decentralised community structures based on the decentralised framework and policy, which entails devolution of power and function to the Local Assembly (district level). This process ensures the participation and empowerment of people in the identification, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of their own development activities. The decentralised planning structures at the assembly and local level are as follows<sup>2</sup>:

The District Assembly

The Area Development Committee (ADC)

The Area Executive Committee (AEC)

The Village Development Committee (VDC)

The implementation structure of the programme adopted the above decentralised structures and added four more structures (figure 1 below). Three were added at the village level, namely: the Village Action Groups (VAG), Project Management Committee (PMC) and Circle Committees; and one at the district level namely, the District Programme Management Team (DPMT).

Community mobilisation at the village is concerned with the VDC, VAG, PMC and the Circle Committees. Each is described below:

Circle committee: A circle is a group of members (about 30) of a particular village responsible for discussing and analysing their environment, identify their needs and come up with action plans that are presented to the whole village through the VAGs. Once the village agrees on the plan, it is presented to the VDC, which forwards them up to the DA for funding. The circle committee comprises 10 people (5 men and 5 women), elected from among the members, and is mandated to supervise the day to day running of the circle.

Project Management Committee (PMC): This is a committee of 10 people (5 male and 5 female) elected from among the beneficiaries of a particular project in order to manage implementation of the project. This committee is temporary depending on the type of micro project. Its major role is to oversee the implementation of a specific micro project such as maize production, dairy production, etc. Specific roles include:

- Mobilising and organising beneficiaries for project implementation activities,
- Supervising implementation of projects,
- Following up on individual beneficiaries, and
- Keeping records and writing reports to the VAG/VDC.

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<sup>2</sup> This is the basic decentralised structure in Malawi, which is followed by most service providers, including the public agricultural extension service. Some additional structures can be added to suit the needs of a particular project as done by RLSP.

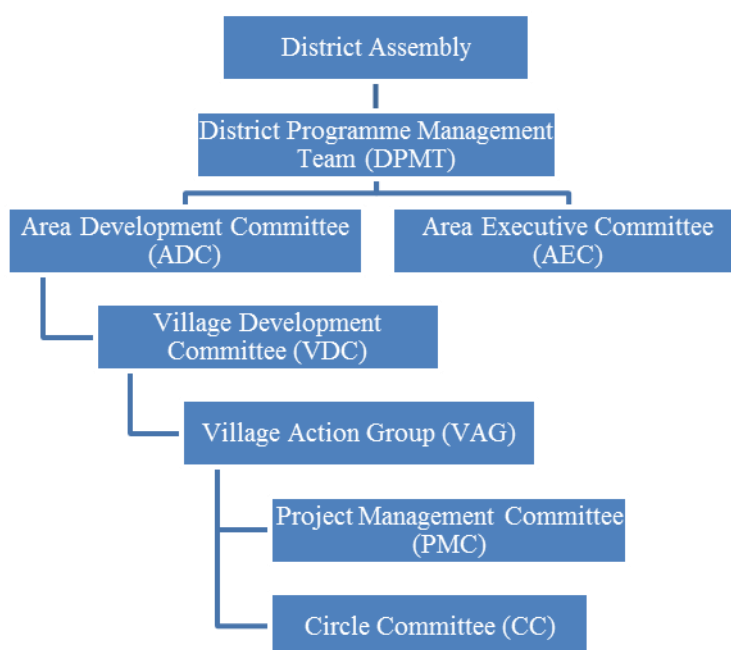


Figure 1: The Programme Implementation Structure

Village Action Group (VAG): This is comprised of 5 men and 5 women elected by people in a village to oversee the formulation and implementation of development activities in that particular village. It works hand in hand with the circle committee. Its roles include:

- Organising development meetings for the village,
- Verifying development projects to be done in their village and submit to the VDC,
- Facilitating the identification of beneficiaries for particular micro projects,
- Ensuring that conditions set for each micro project are adhered to,
- Supervising and monitoring the progress of the projects in the village,
- Reporting to the VDC on the progress of the projects in their village, and
- Liaising with PMC on important aspects of their projects.

Village Development Committee (VDC): This is a representative body from a group of villages vested with the responsibility of facilitating development planning and management. This committee is comprised of members from VAGs and its specific roles include:

- Organising development meetings for the VDC,
- Coordinating community based issues with ADC and DEC and communicating messages from ADC and DEC to the communities,
- Encouraging and mobilising community resources for popular participation in self-help activities,
- Assisting in identifying priorities and preparation of community needs and submitting the same to ADC/DA,
- Supervising, monitoring and evaluating the implementation of development activities in the village,

- Soliciting external funding for prioritised community based projects,
- Coordinating the activities of the various PMCs (dairy, goats, borehole, food security, etc.),
- Initiating locally funded self help activities,
- Reporting to the group village headman all activities and discussions of the committee.

Among the notable achievements were as follows:

- ✓ An increased food security in the impact area due to an increase in yields of food crops such as maize, sweet potatoes and cassava, which benefited a total of 30,471 households. In addition, population of chickens, goats, pigs and dairy animals also increased through a pass-on programme.
- ✓ Participants in both formal and informal income generating activities reported an increase in income that enabled them to accumulate household assets such as improved housing, livestock, bicycles, TV sets, radios, cell phones and invest in their children's education. A total of 2,829 beneficiaries accessed financial services from the village small scale business fund for their income generating activities through 262 groups.
- ✓ 11,353.6ha conserved.
- ✓ Well established revolving fund for each village development committee (VDC) serviced many farmers with a focus on women and largely contributed to increased yields above. From 2010/2011, VDCs were encouraged to save these funds with a bank for safe custody.
- ✓ Improved water supply in the impact area through the provision of boreholes/shallow wells to which RLSP contributed 32%. Expected to have contributed to the quality of life of participants and facilitated work on micro-projects.

### 5.3 Irrigation, Rural Livelihoods and Agricultural Development Project

The Irrigation, Rural Livelihoods and Agricultural Development Project (IRLADP) is a Ministry of Agriculture investment programme focusing on an integrated package of interlocking support, covering irrigation, and demand-driven extension and marketing activities. The development objectives of the project are: (i) To raise agricultural productivity and net incomes of approximately 196,550 (net) poor rural households in 11 target districts of Malawi in a sustainable manner, and (ii) strengthen the recipient's institutional capacity for long-term irrigation development.

In line with these objectives food security has improved mainly through a reduction in soil erosion in protected areas and an increase in maize and rice yields from 1.6 to 3.0 ton/ha for maize and 1 to 1.6ton/ha for rice. Beneficiaries perceived food security as the most significant achievement of the project. In addition, beneficiary household annual income increased by 38.7 percent in IRLADP impact areas between 2005/06 and 2007/08 mainly arising from increase in agricultural incomes. Funded by IFAD and World Bank, the project has supported 286,129 beneficiaries as of December 2011. About 67% of the beneficiaries benefited from the Input for Assets sub-component; 17% from the rain water harvesting and soil conservation sub-component, 8% from marketing and post-harvest assets; and 4% from farm business organisation capacity building, and 4% from the irrigation sub-component. About 40% of the 30,186 beneficiaries who accessed financial services for various income

generating activities were women. The most popular among women was the input for assets sub-component.

#### **5.4 Farm Income Diversification Programme (FIDP)**

Funded by the European Union, FIDP is a country-wide programme covering 12 districts in its 8-year second phase (from 17 in phase 1) which will end in 2017. The main objective is to achieve a sustainable improvement in livelihoods of rural communities through diversifying farmers' income. The programme purpose is to increase food security and income levels of rural households ensuring a sustainable use of soil and water resources by encouraging business development and employment as well as improved marketing of agricultural products in selected communities. It has four components, namely: on-farm activities; capacity building; support at village level supplies; and technical assistance.

FISP aims at achieving the following outputs:

- Natural resources are managed sustainably
- Post-harvest storage and processing is improved
- Smallholder agriculture productivity is increased and diversified
- Agri-business is promoted
- Capacities of FIDP communities, the MoAFS and other stakeholders are improved
- The social development of FIDP communities is enhanced
- Co-ordination and knowledge management is improved

#### **5.5 Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs)**

A number of NGOs are implementing smart agriculture with special attention to gender issues. Notable among these include the National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi (NASFAM), Oxfam, Action Aid, MVP, World Vision, Care International, Total Land Care and Concern Universal. These have economic enhancement programmes for women and also promote natural resource management practices, including conservation agriculture. Among the lessons learned is that use of farmer to farmer approaches is effective in reaching the poor farmers including women; access to financial services is important in an economic enhancement programme and village loans and saving schemes have been popular among the women folk.

The map overleaf shows all districts of Malawi.



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