



REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

NATIONAL STATEMENT

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY

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PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

DURING THE HIGH-LEVEL DEBATE

OF THE 79TH UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK, USA

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- **Your Excellency Philémon Yang President of the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly;**
- **Your Excellency António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations;**
- **Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government and Leaders of Delegations;**
- **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Every member state of these United Nations relates to other nations in the world on three dimensions: cooperation, competition, and conflict. And how we manage our relationships on each of these dimensions will ultimately determine the kind of world we will create for the children of tomorrow. So when we sit in this chamber to deliberate on the cooperation, or competition, or conflict between member states, we are actually designing and deciding our future.

I am therefore glad that the theme of our debate this year touches on all three dimensions, because the bottom line is that in all three, we can and must do better. This year's theme calls on us to act together to advance peace, sustainable development, and dignity. This is a call to stronger multilateral cooperation. But if we are serious about cooperation, then we must act with urgency in fixing and reforming the United Nations and other multilateral institutions, and one fix that we from African demand is for

the United Nations to embrace democracy in the Security Council by giving Africa two permanent seats with veto power. When I first made this call in my inaugural address in this chamber, I was delighted to hear President Biden also announce that the United States is in favour of this reform. Similarly, when I met President Xi Jinping of China three weeks ago, I was delighted to hear that he too is in favor of stronger representation of the interests of developing countries in the Security Council. So, Mr. President, the time to fix this is now.

We need this fix to strengthen our voice on the issues that matter to us in Africa. In the four years that I have been President, I have declared a state of natural disaster every year because of climate change impacts that we cannot solve without multilateral cooperation. And for one of those years, I was chair of two development communities, namely the Southern Africa Development Community and the Least Developed Countries, and I learnt firsthand that no nation can survive a global crisis or develop in the face of shocks without strong multilateral cooperation to sustain it.

Even this year, I see how challenging it has been for my country and for Malawians. Coming off the back of the state of natural disaster that I declared last year to secure international cooperation in response to the devastation caused by Cyclone Freddy, I have had to declare another state

of natural disaster this year to secure international cooperation in response to the El Niño weather conditions that have destroyed crops in three quarters of the country's districts, leaving a fifth of the Malawian population without enough food to last the year. And this is happening in the face of the devastating trauma we have suffered as a nation for the past three months from the tragic death of our Vice President, Right Honourable Dr. Saulos Claus Chilima, in a plane crash whose cause is yet to be established by the German experts we have asked to investigate the accident, yet another example of the necessity of international cooperation. Even the great strides of development we have made over the past four years have been facilitated by strong international cooperation. Whether it be the four road corridors and hundreds of secondary schools we are constructing through our cooperation with the United States; or the M1 road we are rehabilitating and expanding through our cooperation with the European Union; or the railway system we have revived for the first time in 40 years through our cooperation with China; or the orthopedic and neurosurgery hospital we have developed through our cooperation with Norway; or the Makanjira road we are ready to develop through our cooperation with Saudi Arabia; or the investments we are making to strengthen education and governance institutions through our cooperation with the United Kingdom; or the solar power plants we have developed through our cooperation with Japan; or the Extended Credit Facility from the International Monetary Fund that has unlocked our access to the World

Bank's budgetary and IDA support through our cooperation with development partners; or the life-saving food assistance we mobilized for the people of Mangochi following the impact of Tropical Storm Ana through our cooperation with Iceland; or our implementation of social protection programs to help rural women enjoy economic empowerment through our cooperation with Ireland; or the procurement of emergency food, fertilizers, and climate resilient seeds for climate-ravaged Malawian communities through our cooperation with Tanzania, Ukraine, Egypt, Iceland, Russia, Morocco, and many others, Malawi is a testament to the power of cooperation to move a nation's development forward into an inclusively wealthy and sustainable future that is brighter than the past. It is in fact this foundation of international cooperation that we have built on to actively engage in intergovernmental negotiations on the Pact for the Future that we are fully endorsing at this 79th Session of the General Assembly. It is also this foundation of international cooperation that we have built on to host 80 international organizations and institutions for our second annual Malawi Partners Conference here in New York to get investor alignment for our ATM Strategy of boosting productivity and value addition in the sectors of Agriculture, Tourism, and Mining that hold the greatest promise for Malawi's economic transformation.

If the future belongs to nations that know how to leverage the power of international cooperation, then the future belongs to

Malawi. If the future belongs to nations with an unapologetic commitment to multilateral collaboration, then the future belongs to Malawi. If the future belongs to nations that are driven by the moral conviction to uphold the values of servant-leadership, shared prosperity, ending corruption, and the rule of law, then the future belongs to Malawi. If the future belongs to nations that have adopted a no-retreat and no-surrender attitude towards the achievement of SDGs by 2030, then the future belongs to Malawi. If the future belongs to nations that put its children first, the way that Malawi has done by resolving to end child marriage and the poisoning of children with lead products by 2030.

But, Mr. President, our efforts to move forward in fifth gear are being significantly slowed down by a global system of multilateral agencies and financial institutions that are too slow, too inefficient, too monolithic, and too undemocratic for the kind of speedy and tailor made interventions we need. As a result of our refusal to practice the democracy of equal representation here in the UN, our calls for member states to practice democracy in their own jurisdictions are beginning to fall on deaf ears. As a result of our refusal to honour climate financing pledges or link them to debt relief, the debt-to-GDP ratios in developing countries like Malawi are growing at an alarming rate, posing a significant threat to global financial stability. If this is not fixed, those who keep us in a state of perpetual debt when they have the resources to cancel those

debts should make no mistake: the spreading debt crisis in the developing world is a cancer that will make your own economies unsafe. So the time to fix this is now.

Mr. President,

I said that the second dimension of international relations is competition, and again in this area we all can and must do better. There is nothing wrong with healthy competition between nations, because competition fuels innovation, improves quality, and multiplies options for citizens, which is the essence of freedom. But as we have done in global sports, we must make competition between nations fair by regularly reviewing and revising the rules on which our international system is based, to ensure that the way nations compete and what they compete for is not rigged to disenfranchise some countries as we compete for natural resources, international markets, financial support, and new technologies, which are currently skewed against the Global South.

Even with the era of Artificial Intelligence being fully upon us, I worry that the rules for regulating this arena are already being written to empower some nations and give them unfair advantages over others. We need more than a rules-based system. We also need the rules themselves to foster fair competition. Of course, what this means is that we need stronger governance institutions that can enforce fair rules for accessing education, markets, technology, financing, and

natural resources. It is therefore my central contention, Mr. President, that the one place we must have strong governance is here. If governance is weak here, there will be no one to regulate the collaboration and competition between nations in an equitable manner, and it is this absence of equity that is at the root of unwinnable conflict in Eastern Europe, in Palestine, in Eastern DRC, and counting. So we need governance reform to make the United Nations stronger, because the world needs a strong UN that can be good and peaceful, not a weak UN that can only be harmless, and we need it now.

Thank you for your attention.