



Govt recognizes role of CSOs and PVT sector in agriculture- APM



Urbanizing rural housing through VSL initiative



Towards structuring grain markets: new Hope for Malawi

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The Private Sector Commits to contribute towards the achievement of SDGs

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## Vision

**To be a corporate citizenship center of excellence in building resilient communities and sustainable businesses.**

## Mission

**Promoting and Building Resilient Communities and Sustainable Businesses through Partnership.**

## Mandate

**Promote the role of business in development**



## EDITOR'S NOTE



Welcome to the last edition for the year 2017 and the last but one edition for the 2017/2018 financial quarter. This edition focuses on major activities that the African Institute of Corporate Citizenship (AICC) has undertaken and also highlights some of the successes registered in the quarter.

During the quarter, AICC created a forum where stakeholders in the grain market explored options that could create a profitable grain market. These fora included a conference on the future of grain market which was held in Blantyre and a debate on the future of grain market which was held in Lilongwe and aired live on Zodiak Broadcasting Station (ZBS) and repeated on Times Television.

The conference on the future of grain market resulted in a position paper where over 100 stakeholders from government, private sector, civil society and farming community made several recommendations among which were the structuring of the grain market as is the case with the tobacco market, regulating the grain market and improving information flow among players.

The debate on the other hand discussed causes of the current price trends in grain markets and their impact on farmers and the economy, explored and recommended possible sustainable price fluctuation mitigation strategies for grain commodities and the role of state and non-state actors in price mitigation interventions. The debate provided several proposals that need to be discussed further relating to export ban/export mandate, policy/regulatory issues, and commercial agriculture development.

AICC also created a forum where the private sector was engaged on their role in the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). During the engagement activities, the private sector through the Malawi Confederation of Chambers of Commerce and industry (MCCCI) committed to play a role in the achievement of all 17 SDGs. Government on the other hand also committed itself to work in partnership with the private sector to ensure that the Global Development Agenda is achieved.

The edition also shows the social economic impact that AICC's interventions in Malawi are having on people. We should how interventions have improved productivity, how collective marketing has improved farmers' bargaining power and how Village Savings and Loans (VSL) have improved farmers' resilience.

I wish you a wonderful time as you take a journey into this edition.

**Kondwani Hilary Chitosi,**  
**Communications and Reporting Officer**

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- Chrispin Namwera
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## EXECUTIVE NOTE



I am pleased to welcome you, our dear reader to this quarterly newsletter for the October-December 2017 quarter. As we continue in our quest to deliver the best service to society in building resilient communities, we will keep you updated on current developments both at The African Institute of Corporate Citizenship (AICC) and around the world. We are continuing to drive sustainable growth in agriculture, health, governance and the sustainable Development Goals in general through the various platforms and initiatives that are in place

2017 was a really exciting and great year for AICC and we anticipate 2018 to be even better. Over the year AICC staff have been working hard to ensure growth in building sustainable and resilient communities. 2017 has been a very successful year for the organization, and we're proud to tell you all about it in this newsletter. We are very excited about what 2018 has in store for all of us. This will be a year of growth and new opportunities for everyone at AICC and all stakeholders we serve at large.

We appreciate your continued commitment to the organization through various ways and our growth. We are confident that we will have another rewarding year ahead.

Enjoy the newsletter.

**Felix Lombe PhD**

**Chief Executive Officer**

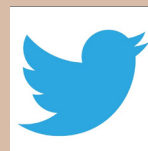
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## PRIVATE SECTOR COMMITS TO CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS ACHIEVEMENT OF SDGs



Dr Felix Lombe (L), Mr Karl Chokotho (C) and Hon Dr Jean Kalilani (L)

"Maybe I should start by calling for a show of hands. How many private sector members are not interested in seeing the country develop? As you can see, there is none who is not interested in seeing the country develop," said Karl Chokotho, President of Malawi Confederation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (MCCCI) as he started making a commitment speech on behalf of the private sector to contribute towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Chokotho was speaking during a workshop organized by the African Institute of Corporate Citizenship (AICC) in partnership with MCCCI, NBS Bank and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to engage the private sector in the achievement of the SDGs held at the Bingu International Conventional Centre (BICC) on 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2017.

"The private sector is committed to seeing sustainable development. There are 17 SDGs and we are all committed to seeing that the SDGs are achieved," said Chokotho.

Chief Executive Officer of AICC, Dr Felix Lombe said there is need to create awareness of what SDGs are and also on the role that members of the private sector can play to ensure that all 17 SDGs are achieved.

"There is need to create awareness of what SDGs are and then

look at which SDGs can be addressed by the private sector. We are looking forward to a more enhanced partnership in trying to bring to the centre stage the role of the private sector in achieving SDGs," said Lombe.

Minister of Gender, Children Disability and Social Welfare, Honourable Dr Jean Kalilani who represented government during the workshop said government is committed to ensuring that the private sector is engaged in all sectors of the economy to promote sustainable social and economic development of the country and its citizens through public-private partnerships.



By Kondwani Chitosi

"The government is looking forward to practical and feasible strategies of engaging the private sector to contribute to the attainment of SDGs. I challenge you to mainstream the SDGs in your plans and action," said Kalilani.

**"There are 17 SDGs and we are all committed to seeing that the SDGs are achieved"**

## CHIEF INSPIRES SUBJECTS IN COTTON PRODUCTION



**A field visit to GVH Chikadya's cotton field**

Cotton production has dwindled over the years hitting as low as 15,000 MT during the 2015/16 season. Small-holder farmers have on average managed to produce 600Kg/Ha, clearly depicting inefficiencies in the production cycles. Contributive to this phenomenon is among other inaccessibility of inputs such as pesticides and certified seed, nevertheless, cotton farmers have been negligent in following good agricultural practices that are paramount as far as cotton production is concerned.

It is against this background that the African Institute of Corporate Citizenship (AICC) through its cotton platform under the Malawi Agriculture Partnership program facilitated the mounting of cotton demonstrations as a way of enhancing adoption of good agricultural practices for increased production and productivity among cotton farmers.

Cotton farmers in the country come from a background belief that it is impossible to produce more than 600kg/ha, hence have limited their efforts.

One farmer Mr Wilson Bandason who is also Group Village Headman (GVH) Chikadya under Traditional Authority Ganya, in Ntcheu district had different thoughts contrary to other people's beliefs. He, like many farmers in the region had poor access to inputs hence never managed to produce enough.

However, during the 2016/17 season, he managed to access the input demonstration package together with 20 other farmers from the , Shape vale Extension Planning Area (EPA), under cotton demonstration program with help from AICC, Cotton Council of Malawi and other stakeholders. The pack contained certified seed (QM-301), Nyonga Pack (containing: dual magnum, harness, cypermethrin, detamethrin, acetamepirid and foliar fertilizer).

These are essential pesticides, herbicides and fertilizer required for production, which are not accessible to most farmers. With these, all he needed to do was to follow GAPs (Early land preparation, early Planting, thinning, gap filling, regular and timely weed control, application of Foliar Fertilizer and pest management) as instructed by extension workers, which is mostly not the case with most cotton farmers.

Mr. Bandason being a community leader and lead farmer of more than 20 other farmers led by example by timely following all good agricultural practices.

He tilled the land before the onset of the first rains and by the 1<sup>ST</sup> of November, he planted his seed at the recommended spacing and plants seed station. He thinned, filled gaps and regularly controlled weeds as recommended. Foliar fertilizer, pesticides and herbicides were adequately and timely applied ensuring a successful vegetative and productive stages for the plant.

He additionally applied his indigenous knowledge in controlling pests and weeds. For example, he used flies as indicators of pests which then gave him signals to apply the pesticides. This proved to be very effective and results depicted it all, as by end December, bolls were developed, with pests and diseases fully controlled.



**By Isaac Tembo**

By June, 2017, he had begun picking and at the end of the cotton market season he managed to realize 2730Kg/ha, beating the odds. This clearly depicts that with improved access to inputs, extension services and following of GAPs can indeed improve cotton production and productivity.

The GVH sold his cotton at the farm gate price of K300/kg, however, he has only managed to sell about half of his produce, owing to the inaccessibility of markets in his area whereby farmers travel at an average distance of 50 kilometers to the nearest market depot.

These market inefficiencies have reduced his earnings but nonetheless he has managed to break even by accumulating about K300, 000.00 from the 1000kg he has sold.

All the same, he has managed to prove it to farmers, 20 follower farmers and indeed to the world that cotton can be up-scaled so long as conditions are conducive enough.

**He uses flies as indicators of pests which then gave him signals to apply the pesticides. This proved to be very effective and results depicted it all, as by end December, bolls were developed, with pests and diseases fully controlled**



## GOVT RECOGNIZES ROLE OF CSOs AND PRIVATE SECTOR IN AGRICULTURE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT- APM



His Excellency Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika touring AICC's pavilion during the 14<sup>th</sup> National Agriculture Fair

**T**he President of the Republic of Malawi, His Excellency Prof. Arthur Peter Muntharika said that his government recognizes the role that the private sector plays in influencing positive change in the country's agriculture sector.

The President said this after touring pavilions including that of the African Institute of Corporate Citizenship (AICC) that were mounted as part of the 14<sup>th</sup> National Agriculture Fair.

"Apart from honouring the farmer, we also recognise the important roles which the private sector and civil society organisations (CSOs) play in agriculture sector. I know you are in the forefront in influencing policy changes," said Mutharika.

The President said the private sector and CSOs have great ideas which can be used to mobilize resources that revitalize the agriculture sector.

"But let me also ask you one thing: Go and mobilise investors for the sectors. We have enough good ideas. What we need are more investors to recapitalize the agriculture sector and get into action."

"Likewise, I also urge the banks to come up with tailor-made products that support agriculture. Banks should now reposition themselves to support the entire value chain beyond agri-business. When we make our farmers prosper, everyone, including banks will prosper," said Mutharika.

He reassured the nation of his government's commitment to create a conducive environment for investors mentioning the reduction of inflation rate from 24.6 percent in 2014 to 10.2 percent in July 2017.



By Kondwani Chitosi

"And let me emphasise this point today. We will continue improving the economy until every Malawian feels economically comfortable. We will continue building a good road network across the country because our farmers need them. We all need good roads, including those who want me to stop developing this country. But for me, this is a point of no return. The economy is turning around and the best is yet to come!" Said the president.

**"I know you are in the forefront in influencing policy changes"**



## EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH SMALL SCALE BUSINESSES



### Bakery training in progress

The African Institute of Corporate Citizenship (AICC) in partnership with Heifer International, Network for Youth Development (NFYD), Malawi Union of Savings and Credit Cooperatives (MUSCCO), and Lilongwe District Agriculture Development Office (DADO) has empowered 120 farmers with bakery skills which will help them increase volumes of agro - processed products.



**Rejoice Jenda**

The farmers who came from Mpingu and Ngwangwa Extension Planning Areas in Lilongwe were empowered through a training under the Sustainable Agriculture Lead Farmer Programme (SALFP) which aims to reduce poverty and vulnerability to climate change of 16, 000 households and ensure improved livelihoods of rural communities in the targeted areas through the lead farmer approach by increased market access and entrepreneurial skills among small-holder farmers.

The training will also help the farmers who belong to Talandila, Tilipano and Umodzi clubs to sell good quality of baked goods and soy milk at a profitable price. Farmers will also use skills and knowledge imparted from the training in

their respective homes as they will be able to make soymilk and baked goods for their families as one way of improving the nutritional status in their households since dairy milk is very expensive and not all farmers can manage.

One of the lead farmers, Agnes Ntchentche from Mpingu EPA, appreciated the training by AICC saying that she had been in the bakery business for so long but lacked some skills as she had never undergone any such training.

She further added that due to the training, she is now able to bake various types of confectioneries using cheap and readily available resources such as bread, dough-nuts, scones, cakes, bans hence able to make more money than before.

**(SALFP) which aims to reduce poverty and vulnerability to climate change of 16, 000 households and ensure improved livelihoods of rural communities in the targeted areas through the lead farmer approach by increased market access and entrepreneurial skills among small-holder farmers**



## THE FARMING SUCCESS OF MR. MADALITSO CHAPWETEKA

Madalitso Chapweteka born in 1979 started farming rice in 1998 on a 0.4 Ha piece of land from where he used to harvest 400 Kgs. This was the case because he was using recycled seed and without any good agricultural practices. His life started to change for the better in 2009 with the coming in of the African Institute of Corporate Citizenship (AICC) at Domasi Irrigation Scheme.

A I C C  
a project  
providing  
through  
loan to the  
promoting  
agricultural



By Immaculate Phiri

introduced  
which was  
inputs  
revolving  
farmers,  
g o o d  
practices

(GAPs). The project also introduced modern farming technologies in rice production in order for them to increase their rice production.

Mr Chapweteka was one of the first 2057 beneficiaries of the farm input loan and the trainings in good agriculture practices in 2009. He immediately put to practice what he learnt from the project on his 0.4 ha plot and harvested 50 bags that harvest season which he sold at a total value of K705, 000.

He saved K500, 000 from the proceeds and bought ten more plots (0.4 Ha each) and some inputs for the next growing season. Mr Chapweteka continued to adhere to the saving culture, proper planning, record keeping and taking farming seriously as a business he learnt from AICC.

Mr Chapweteka who is married with four children now grows rice on a 0.8 Ha and has managed to buy one tonne Nissan hard body car from his rice proceeds. He has also managed to send his children to school and bought some livestock.



Madalitso Chapweteka and his wife with their pick up

## URBANIZING RURAL HOUSING THROUGH VSL INITIATIVE

Sydney Mkumbadzala, 34 years, is from Phandiro Irrigation Scheme in Machinga and had a small farm from where he grew rice for consumption and sale. He lived in a mud and wattle house, with his family. Sydney together with his friends formed VSL group with support from AICC to supplement his rice income in 2013. He was amongst the men who defied all odds in sparing his farming time and making some savings for his living. Though the majority in the group were women, Sydney wanted to demonstrate to fellow men that VS&L is not for women only.



By Immaculate Phiri

home with K375, 000. The dream of having a decent house in the village started to build up in him, he used part of the money to mold bricks. Still not satisfied he joined the group for the second time and the savings were enough to start building the house as this time around it was K776, 000. The youthful farmer managed to purchase iron sheets and cement.

"My aim was to have a house like those you town people has but it should be right here in the village. Through hard work in rice farming and village savings and loans, am able to accomplish my ambitions," said Mkumbazala.

During their first groups share out, he managed to save and went

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Mr and Mrs Mkumbadza sitting outside the house they built through VSL

### ... From page 8

He challenges that he will go home with more than one million in the next share out which he will use to finish his new house. He encourages other farmers who thought that VSLs are for women only that the truth is a blue lie as he is an example of men who benefited a lot from Village Savings and Loan.

Before joining the VSL Group, Sydney recalls facing a number of hardships as he was failing to increase hectareage for his rice production. He faced many challenges in purchasing inputs, paying for labor, paying school fees for his children and seeking medical services for his family.



Mr and Mrs Mkumbadza posing next to their old house

## SUSTAINABILITY IN DEVELOPING THE COTTON SECTOR: LESSONS FROM THE 76<sup>TH</sup> ICAC PLENARY SESSION

The International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC) is an association of cotton producing governments, consuming and trading countries which was formed in 1939. ICAC exists to assist governments in fostering a healthy world cotton economy through serving as a clearinghouse for technical information on cotton production and by providing stakeholders with space for discussion on cotton issues of international significance.

ICAC also raises awareness of emerging issues, provide information relevant to the solving of problems and to foster cooperation in the achievement of common objectives. Although ICAC serves as a statistical observer and brings together various cotton stakeholders, it does not in essence intervene directly in market operations.

The ICAC, through Secretariat only provides forecasts on



By Chrispin Namwera

cotton supply, use and prices, estimates the supply of extra-fine cotton, and tracks exports by destination and imports by origin.

The Secretariat measures and forecasts cotton consumption and cotton's share of fibre demand in the world and by region and is the primary source in the world for statistics on fibre demand.

Plenary meetings of the ICAC are annual meetings that provide a platform for discussion of international issues of importance to the world cotton industry, and provides opportunities for public, private and civil society organisations from producing, consuming and trading countries to consult on matters of mutual concern. As the International commodity body for cotton and its allied value added products, the ICAC plays a crucial role in the achievement of broad objectives in the cotton industry, and all industry participants and government officials with a concern about the health of the sector are invited to participate in ICAC activities.





Cross section of participants to the 76<sup>th</sup> ICAC plenary session in Uzbekistan

The 76th ICAC Plenary Meeting was held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan from 23rd - 27th October, 2017 under the theme, "Cotton in the Era of Globalisation and Technology Progress". The meeting was attended by 345 persons from over 35 countries, including representatives from 16 Members, four international organizations and nine non-members' countries. Three members from Malawi attended the meeting as observers.

The purpose of attending the meeting was to acquaint ourselves with global cotton issues and trends (which are usually privy to ICAC members) and their implication on the cotton industry in Malawi. The meeting among others provided an opportunity for a delegation from Malawi on recent trends in cotton production and cotton processing technologies.

Improving production practices is an imperative in modern agriculture, due to the competition among crops, limited amount of arable land and concerns about sustainability. Although cotton yields have increased substantially over the last fifty years, rising almost four times, much remains to be done. A substantial part of this year's Plenary Meeting was dedicated to factors that affect production while technical seminars for this year's plenary meeting was focused on ways to control emerging pests that threaten output in many parts of the world. Sessions also explored other important issues such as water usage, reduction of contamination, climate change and best practices in cotton ginning.

The meeting noted that environmental changes were occurring at a faster pace and agricultural research has to cope with the changes that are hard to forecast. Importance of not only facing drought conditions but also waterlogged situations need not to be overemphasized. Use of technologies such as hydroponics for screening cotton under simulated drought as well as waterlogged conditions is the current best method.

Water management was another issue that was discussed by a panel of researchers and scientists during the previous ICAC

meeting but also resurfaced during the 76th Plenary Meeting which signified the seriousness of the problem. The speakers emphasised on the need for developing technologies that can withstand water stress in the face of climate change. Examples included use of precision agriculture in water management; use of deficit irrigation; rain water harvesting technologies among others.

Finally, the challenge of emerging pests and their control was also discussed. While the introduction of biotech cotton in the world distracted attention from bollworm control and increased focus on other pests, farmers found an easy solution to minimize infestation of other pests through good husbandry techniques. Countries like India, Burkina Faso and Pakistan experienced pest pressure in the first five years after the adoption of Bt. technology. However, pest resurgence occurred in the later years of the technology.

Earlier planting of cotton extended the growth period and disturbed the agro-ecosystem, while inviting new pests to emerge as major pests. Burkina Faso, has completely abandoned Bt. technology and this underlines the complex nature of debates around the potential for transgenic crops to help the poor.

The plenary session examined issues related genetically modified (GMO) and non-genetically modified production, including the maintenance of non-GMO cotton production process. Experiences from other countries such as Turkey, despite pursuing only Non Bt Cotton, showed an impressive cotton production growth rate over the past 20 years with yield enhancement from 1050 kg/ha in 1996 to 1700 kg/ha in 2010. The impressive achievement was due to simple changes in management strategies such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Integrated Nutrient Management (INM), soil moisture management, varietal development, mechanization and seed quality management.

A cross section of scientists at the meeting noted that yields have stagnated in major GM-cotton adopting countries while production

costs and pesticide use were increasing constantly, whereas non-GM cotton production continued to be more sustainable in Turkey. The representative from Turkey felt that high technology costs, impending risk of pest resistance to the GM technology and possible risk of weed resistance to herbicides could tilt the favour of choice towards non-GM crops in the near future.

Another important area of discussion during the plenary meeting was on cotton value addition and drivers of informal cotton trade in Africa. Products from cotton can be used in a number of ways ranging from animal feed to food to textile products. Experience from India showed that each and every part of the cotton crop, including its stems, flowers, roots and bark are valuable and have tremendous potential to enhance the profitability of all stakeholders including farmers and ginnerers.

There are several cotton by-products which are either under-utilized or disposed of without any value addition. A large amount of cottonseed is still processed world-wide using traditional methods, leading to a loss of linters and reduced oil recovery. ICAC estimates that one-hundred million tons of cotton stalks, which could be a valuable source of renewable energy, are still mostly burnt in field, causing environmental pollution and soil degradation. Cotton stalks can also be used for particle board production.

Understanding drivers of informal cotton trade and working toward solutions can help increase farm level profitability. Lessons from

neighbouring Zambia and Zimbabwe indicate that increased side selling/buying had led to the withdrawal of major investors from the cotton sectors and production was declining relatively. There are 11 ginnerers in Zambia and 16 in Zimbabwe, many of whom do not provide inputs to growers but actively buy seed cotton during harvest.

Unfortunately, almost half of seed cotton produced in each country is sold to ginnerers who do not provide inputs. Farmers justify such sales by saying that they need immediate cash and prices offered by reputable ginnerers are "unfair". Ginnerers who participate in pirate buying justify their actions that they need huge volumes to keep their gins running. Zimbabwe and Zambia have embarked on policy solutions which include industry regulation, contract enforcement, and farmer education to build trust and facilitate input delivery to farmers.



Media Engagement Crucial in Cotton Sector Development

## FARMER REAPS WITH SYSTEMS OF RICE INTENSIFICATION

By Rice Platform Unit

Ignacio Shuga is a 58 year old father of four and together with his family they derive their livelihoods from rice farming. They used to practice rice farming on a subsistence basis characterized by low productivity levels. From the small piece of land (0.2 Ha), they were able to harvest 7 bags of rice. This low yield was due to consistent use of recycled seed and traditional methods of farming.

He had no knowledge of any good agricultural practices (GAPs) that he could use in their rice field. In 2010/11 growing season when AICC came to assist farmers at Domasi irrigation scheme, Mr. Shuga was one of the beneficiaries of AICC loan and accessed improved seed variety of Kilombero.

After following all the GAPs, Shuga and his wife managed to harvest 40 bags for the first time in their lives. After selling some of their rice, they got K609, 000.

After realizing that they have made

a tremendous improvement in their farming in the preceding growing season, Shuga and his wife encouraged and motivated by the huge profits, decided to cultivate a bigger area in 2012 from which they later harvested 72 bags of rice which was yet another big achievement in their farming business. After selling some of their rice, they got K980, 000. This time around they of built a big house roofed with iron sheets, as his family used to live in a small grass thatched house.

As if this was not enough, Mr. Shuga in the 2015/2016 growing season bought a maize mill and planted it. From maize mill the proceeds, he managed to buy some pigs. As of now Mr. Shuga has 14 pigs.

He runs out of words with AICC as its coming to Domasi has made him and his family very rich people. Mr Shuga's advice to his fellow farmers is "to take farming as a serious business".



Shuga with his maize mill in the background



## MALAWI GRAIN MARKET SYSTEM UNDER MICROSCOPE

By James Mwale

African Institute of Corporate Citizenship (AICC) on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2017 organised a debate in Lilongwe where panelists representing the country's agriculture sector scrutinized the current status and projected the future of the country's grain market.

AICC Chief Executive Officer, Felix Lombe, said the debate, which was attempting to answer the question "Should Malawi extend the Auction System and Export Mandates to grain marketing?", was inspired by threats the current grain marketing landscape is posing to farmers' livelihoods and the economy at large.

"We have advised farmers to produce more, and we have encouraged them to operate in cooperatives, but we still see them crying foul after selling off their produce. That's an indication that something is not in order in the grain marketing system," Lombe said.

He cited this year's scenario where farmers have cried foul after the grain market, which encompasses legumes, cereals, and oilseeds, had suffered a severe drop in prices.

He attributed the problem to inconsistent pricing and lack of proper grain marketing structures.

"The future of grain marketing has a critical bearing on the country's farmers and Growth Domestic Product (GDP) and price fluctuations are greatly hampering economic growth in the country," he explained.

He disclosed that cotton was still number four amongst the country's foreign exchange earners above grain despite the recent successive drops in production against grain harvests whose production has been on the increase.

This, according to Lombe, was an indication that the grain market system lacked a well regulated structure and monitoring strategy saying the sharp contrast in cotton decrease against grain increase should have put grain on a higher position than cotton as a foreign currency fetcher.

The panellists included representation from the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development, Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, AHL Commodities and Agriculture Commodity Exchange.

During the debate, Alex Namawona who is Director of Planning in the Ministry of Agriculture cautioned that as the stakeholders pushed for export markets for grain produce, they should also balance the focus with production saying once in order, the export market would need a constant supply of the grain produce.

He said by 2050, Africa was projected to be in a state of producing less grain and food produce than the demand for the then population and thus the need to ensure that the country's grain produce should be able to match up.

The panellists have since agreed that there is a need for the



The debate in progress

country to have a properly established grain marketing structure which should, among others, include a properly managed Warehouse Receipt System.

**"The future of grain marketing has a critical bearing on the country's farmers and Growth Domestic Product (GDP) and price fluctuations are greatly hampering economic growth in the country"**

## PRIVATE SECTOR KEY IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT- MALAWI GOVERNMENT



Dr Kalilani making her speech on behalf of government during the workshop

The Government of Malawi says that the country cannot achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) if it leaves out the private sector in the implementation of various strategies that aim at achieving the 2030 development agenda.

Minister of Gender, Children Disability and Social Welfare, Jean Kalilani, made the remarks on behalf of government in her speech during a workshop in Lilongwe which was organized by the African Institute of Corporate Citizenship (AICC) together with Malawi Confederation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (MCCCI) with the aim of exploring the role of the private sector in achieving SDGs.

"As you are all aware, the private sector is a key player for development of the country. Leaving out the private sector, partially affected the country to achieve the MDGs," said Kalilani.

Dr Kalilani called on the private sector to work with the government, civil society organisations and development partners to achieve the SDGs at all the levels especially community level through the provision of meaningful Corporate Social Responsibility, providing innovative and effective solutions and contributing towards the attainment of governments' development agenda.

"Government expects more from you to realize the SDGs.

Traditionally, the private sector has restricted its contribution to the poor in a form of social responsibility during disasters. It is high time the private sector begins to plan and implement programmes that uplift the economic wellbeing of the majority who are also the customers of your products," said Kalilani.

Adwell Zembele who is Deputy Director of Economic Planning in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning concurred with Kalilani saying the private sector, just like Government, National Planning Commission, Development Partners and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) is expected to take up opportunities outlined in the Malawi Growth Development Strategy III (MGDSIII) which aims at ensuring that all 17 SDGs are achieved.

"The role of the private sector is to invest in both economic and social sectors to generate economic growth and create wealth," said Zembele.

Speaking during the workshop which was attended by over 80 members of the private sector, President of MCCCI, Karl Chokotho, said the private sector through MCCCI is committed to support government interventions.

He however bemoaned poor of coordination among government and the private sector which is negatively affecting efforts to achieve the SDGs. He concluded by saying that MCCCI and the entire private sector considers achieving the SDGs a key priority.



By Funny Nkhunda

**"It is high time the private sector begins to plan and implement programmes that uplift the economic wellbeing of the majority who are also the customers of your products"**



## MALAWIAN PIGEON PEA FARMERS FIND SILVER LINING AMIDST DWINDLING GROSS MARGINS



Pigeon pea farmers in Khajavi explaining how they are coping amidst dwindling prices

Pigeon pea is the most versatile grain legume grown by smallholder farmers in Malawi for both consumption and export. The crop accounts for 22 percent of the total Malawi legume production and comes third in terms of hectareage. Malawi ranks first in terms of pigeon pea production in Africa and it is the third largest pigeon pea producer in the world, behind India and Burma.

About 80 percent of the crop is exported while the rest is consumed locally yearly. The commercial export has however since 2015 been very volatile following the saturation of the pigeon pea export market.

Chairperson of Khajavu Cooperative, Mr Shadreck Soza described the 2016/2017 season as one of the worst pigeon pea marketing season that farmers from Mulanje, Thyolo and Zomba who produce a majority of pigeon peas in Malawi have faced.

The chairperson said the season saw an average price of MK350/ kilogram against a gross margin of MK250 during the 2015/2016 farming season against a slumping decrease of the prices from MK140 to as low as MK40 during the 2016/2017 farming season.

"We are like sailors whose ship has capsized in the middle of the sea with all their valuables, we do not know where this wind of slumping prices will take us to. One moment you feel, you will get drown, the next you are alive but the condition remains the same; you are still in the middle of the sea anyway," said Mr Soza

Mrs Susan Chimbayo, chairperson of Nandolo Association concurs with Mr Soza on the prospects of 2016/2017 marketing season saying it has been one of the worst years for the smallholder farmer.

"Some farmers have literally nothing to give them hope. The prices on the local market are very bad; the export market is also not forthcoming. The association assisted some farmer groups with a market in Dubai but only managed to sell a little," said Mrs Chimbayo.



By Sangwani Makoko

Despite the seemingly bad seasons that pigeon peas farmers have endured, they have identified coping mechanisms that have helped them to cope with the negative economic implications.

"We are processing pigeon peas into pudding (chipere); the only value addition method we know. We are also surviving on money that we get after selling value added products of other legumes such as groundnuts. We are also producing animal feed which we sell to livestock farmers," said Mr Jonathan George, Secretary of Khajavu Cooperative.

The secretary further added that most farmers are also still holding on to their harvest in anticipation for a better market.

"Most farmer groups are still holding on to the commodity in anticipation for better prices as time progresses. This however is affected by our inability to preserve our harvest in a manner that prolongs the shelf life," said Mr George.

In addition the farmers have joined Village Savings and Loans groups to help them save money in preparation for the next farming season.

**"We are also surviving on money that we get after selling value added products of other legumes such as groundnuts."**

## TOWARDS STRUCTURING GRAIN MARKETS: NEW HOPE FOR MALAWI



Attendees pose for a group photograph during the conference

In the wake of low grain prices, delegates to a National Conference on the Future of Grain Markets in Malawi yesterday recommended the structuring of the grain market as is the case with tobacco.

The recommendations come amid controversies

on the ban of the exportation of maize while prices on the informal market continue to tumble lower than the government-set minimum price of K170 per kilogram (kg) and the main buyer, the State-owned produce trader Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (Admarc) is failing to buy the produce from farmers.

At the same time, although other legumes and pulses fetch high prices on the international market, local farmers sell to intermediate buyers at low prices.

A position paper released on the sidelines the conference, organised by the Malawi Confederation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (MCCCI) and the African Institute for Corporate Citizenship (AICC) held at Chichiri Trade Fair Grounds in Blantyre, also recommended the revamping of the Farmers' Marketing Board and introduction of the Crops Control Commission.

Reads the paper in part: "Grain marketing in Malawi should be restricted to an auction system that can be established just like in tobacco and upscaling of the warehouse receipt system. The economy and the agriculture sector on which it depends should adequately be protected from external shocks and unscrupulous behaviour."

AICC Head of Programmes, Driana Lwanda, said they hope government would take up the recommendations from the conference that brought together government officials, the academia, agricultural civil society organisations and the private sector.

"As a nation, we have to explore how we can penetrate more into the national, regional and global markets. If we had a structured and well governed system, farmers and traders could not have been groaning the way they are doing," she said.

AHL Commodities Exchange (AHCX) chief economist Ted Nakhumwa said if the grain market was formalised, it could be fetching more than Malawi's largest foreign exchange earner, tobacco.

"Our projections show that with a formalised and structured market, Malawi would be getting \$440 million [about K312 billion] annually, which is more than the \$300 million which tobacco has raked in this year. Currently, we are earning only \$70 million from the legumes as we can neither track nor validate sales, volumes and prices," he said.

Director of planning in the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development, Alex Namaona, said apart from grain tracking, it was important to increase value addition and agro-processing to mitigate pricing problems.

"Better markets induce production. The minimum prices we set help guide the market so that farmers are not abused," he said.

**"Our projections show that with a formalised and structured market, Malawi would be getting \$440 million [about K312 billion] annually, which is more than the \$300 million which tobacco has raked in this year"**



# MEET: Chrispin Namwera



I want to be part of the positive change in human life - Chrispin Namwera

Chrispin Namwera is the Project Manager responsible for the Cotton Platform at African Institute of Corporate Citizenship (AICC). Here are ten quick facts about Chrispin:

**1** Chrispin joined AICC in August 2015 as Project Officer for E-Voucher before assuming the position of Project Manager a year later.

**2** Chrispin is an Agribusiness and Livelihoods Specialist by training and has over five years' experience in Value Chain and Enterprise Development, Livelihoods Programming and Agribusiness Extension.

**3** He did his Primary education at Dowa I and II Primary schools before proceeding to Robert Blake Secondary School where he did his secondary education.

**4** Chrispin holds a Bachelor's Degree (Agribusiness) from the University of Malawi and a Masters Degree (Agribusiness) from Junagadh (formerly Gujarat) Agricultural University in India.

**5** Chrispin hails from Namwera Village, Traditional Authority Amidu of Balaka District.

**6** He is the first born son and the second born child in a family of three boys and three girls.

**7** Chrispin enjoys the natural flavor of food. He says: *"I love any food that is well cooked and prepared as long as it is not spicy. Fate as others would say forced me to eat a lot of spicy food while in diaspora. I really*

*enjoy the natural flavor of food and avoid spicy food."*

**8** Chrispin loves soccer and is second to his religion. He started following football and supporting Arsenal Football Club after watching Nwankwo Kanu play in 1999:

*"It was interesting for me to see Nwankwo Kanu, a Nigerian, play in UEFA Champions League. Over the years, I fell in love with his impressive football record. He won a UEFA Champions League medal, a UEFA Cup medal, three FA Cup Winners Medals and two African Player of the Year awards amongst others. Furthermore, he is also one of few players to have won the Premier League, FA Cup, Champions League, UEFA Cup and an Olympic Gold Medal. To me, he proved that Africans can do anything."*

**9** What inspires Chrispin; Colossians 3:23: *"I want to be part of the positive change in human life be it spiritually, socially and academically as chronicled in Colossians 3:23."*

**10** Chrispin believes that whatever we do to on earth should represent God. Be it work or business.

*"God has given us different capacities to serve Him using our positions, knowledge, skills and power. The way we conduct ourselves is a form of worship hence we should ensure that whatsoever we do is acceptable before God."*

# CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE (CFU MODEL)

Conservation Agriculture (CA) is a soil management practice that minimizes the disruption of the soil's structure, composition and natural biodiversity. The Conservation Farming Unit (CFU), an independent organization registered and form part of Zambia National Farmers Union introduced a variation of CA called CfU Model. The model promotes the following as good practices: early land preparation; maintain crop residues in the field for soil cover; early planting; maintaining the same planting station; early and continuous weeding and Crop rotation.

## Tools Needed

- Chaka hoe/strong weeding hoe with narrow blade.
- Blue and white fertilizer cups
- Rope
- 75 cm row sticks
- Pegs

## Land Preparation

### Step 1



Maintain crop residues for soil cover. This reduces run off water and water is held in field. Termites also harvest residues and add organic matter to soil.

### Step 2



Blade must be at right angle to shaft and firm. Learn how to fit blade and swing properly.

### Step 3



The recommended depth and length of basin in CfU Model. 20 cm deep and 30 cm long to accommodate different crop seeds. Width of the chaka hoe blade.

### Step 4



75cm across row and 70cm between centers of basins in the remaining rows. Finish land preparation before rains; being ready to plant immediately after the first rains is the key high yields.

### Step 5



Apply 1 cup of lime with the basal. Always use the No.8 white cup. This is 4 bags/ha. Always use No. 7 cup. For good yield scatter 2 cups in bottom of basin. Manure is better than fertilizer. Apply one double handful per basin.

**F** i n i s h  
l a n d

preparations  
before rains  
start.



**CHIMANGA**  
**MU MAYENJE A**  
**CFU**  
FOLLOWER FARMER





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