



**2021 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Keynote Remarks as prepared for delivery on Friday, 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

**by**

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The Guest of Honour, Honourable Ministers of Trade, Sosten Gwengwe, MP; the Director for Trade who graced the opening of the Annual General Meeting; the board chair Dr. Anne Phoya and other board members; the CEO of MaSP Madam Stella Masangano, distinguished invited guests; Ladies and Gentlemen present here but also joining us virtually.

It gives me great pleasure and indeed quite an honour to have been invited to the Malawi Scotland Partnership Annual General Meeting and to deliver this key-note address themed: **“Intergenerational Leadership, resilience through youth led innovations”**.

Let me start by sharing with you all, few of the many untold stories of young people who are innovating and addressing some of the core challenges facing Malawi.

- Brenda Mwale, a climate change leader who has mobilised fellow young people in her community to embrace climate change interventions such as climate smart agriculture.
- Hastings Nhlane is the co-founder and CEO of ACADES, and they are creating youth employment and promoting economic opportunities for youth through agribusiness.
- Madalitso Chidumu is founder of Agri-Digital Hub, who scout, test, and upscale Digital innovations that promote agribusiness and transform the Agricultural sector in Malawi.
- Musayiwale Mwale, a climate change leader based here in Lilongwe is producing briquettes called Lawilawi to replace charcoal.
- Myself, I am the founder of the Centre for Youth and Development, we leverage on ICT to improve educational outcomes for students in Malawi. Together with our counterparts in Scotland the Turing Trust who are also founded and led by a young person we have installed computers in 145,000 secondary schools and our work is impacting over 60,000 students annually. My organization has received and implemented 4 Scottish Government Funded projects.

These stories are just some of the real, and very tangible examples of how young people in Malawi are innovating.

These stories prove that young people **are not just focussed on “youth” issues**. They are **addressing key issues that affect not only youth, but the societies that we live in – from education and training, health, agriculture, economic development and many more**.

These stories **prove that young people are the cusp of innovation**. They are building solutions that are fundamentally altering societies and providing solutions to the problems facing our country.

These stories **demonstrate that young people have embraced intergenerational leadership and are working with adults to develop solutions that make Malawi better**, leveraging on each other’s experience, creativity and new ways of doing things.

The theme **“Intergenerational Leadership, resilience through youth led innovations”** is well suited as it speaks to the critical time we are in, where Malawi and the world over are grappling with emerging issues, changing educational landscapes, environmental degradation, climate change, pandemics such as the vestiges of the

Covid-19. Yet amidst all these challenges, it is increasingly the younger demographics who are standing out as a voice for hope and for the future we want to imagine.

Malawi has a very youthful population, which if properly educated, can positively contribute to achieving the nation's developmental aspirations. According to the Population and Housing Census of 2018, half of the population are youth. This demography represents a significant and growing human resource, which if successfully harnessed, has the potential to contribute to the attainment of the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy III, Sustainable Development Goals and the Malawi 2063 agenda.

The current demographic trend presents an opportunity. This is Malawi's potential! This potential is Malawi's source of the new innovative ideas and energy we need to power our country's transformation.

Through this theme, I would like us to dive into three important aspects;

- How can we foster intergenerational leadership?
- How can we foster resilient youth-led innovations?
- What investments can be made to foster growth of intergenerational leadership and resilient youth-led innovations.

Youth unemployment, failing education standards, poor health systems, pandemics, climate change and many more are intergenerational issues. The only way to address them is by meaningfully involving the generations that will inherit these challenges and experience their impacts.

**When leaders and youth engage and co-create policies, strategies, and opportunities the impossible becomes possible! To make this a reality, we need young people in the spaces and dialogues to contribute to designing and implementing policies and strategies that allow youth creativity and entrepreneurship to thrive. Our collective support can help to unleash their entrepreneurial spirit, so that we can all reap the fruits of this land of opportunity called Malawi.**

**Malawi needs to invest in youth and co-create, with them, their space to realize their potential and create their own opportunities. Young people need to be supported to acquire the right mindsets and skills, so they are better equipped to unlock all the opportunities, use their creativity and innovation to create solutions to our problems and transform our country.**

We have all seen what young people can do. If we truly want a better Malawi, it is possible. It starts with embracing intergenerational leadership and working together.

As we embrace the partnership between Malawi and Scotland. Let us embrace the partnership between young people and adults.

I was going to close by saying "Imagine what we can do if we work together". But you know what? It's going to take more than imagination to effect real change. So, on behalf of young people out there, I stand here and ask you all to work together with young people and taking action.

Thank you