



**Government of Malawi**



**Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security**

## **THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL POLICY**

*Promoting agricultural productivity for national food security and economic growth and development through value chain development*

Produced by

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADD	Agriculture Development Division
ADP	Agriculture Development Programme
ADMARC	Agriculture Development and Marketing Cooperation
AMIS	Agricultural Market Information Systems
AU	African Union
ASWAP	Agriculture Sector Wide Approach
ALDSAP	Agricultural and Livestock Development Strategy and Action Plan
ATCC	Agriculture Technology Clearing Committee
CAADP	Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Produce
GMO	Genetically Modified Organisms
IDEA	Initiative for Development and Equity in African Agriculture
US\$	United States Dollar
SAPs	Structural Adjustments Programme
MACE	Malawi Agriculture Commodity Exchange
MASIP	Malawi Agricultural Sector Investment Programme
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
NAP	National Agriculture Policy
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
PVP	Plant Variety Protection
UPOV	International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants
CGIARs	Consultative Group on International Agriculture Research Centers

## **FOREWORD**

The National Agricultural Policy seeks to raise the profile of the agricultural sector so that it effectively contributes to the national development aspirations of turning the country from a predominantly consuming to a producing and exporting nation targeting all value chain stages.

The National Agriculture Policy builds on the various policy statements in the sector to give guiding principles to improve agriculture productivity in the wake of various national, regional and global opportunities and challenges. The vision of the National Agriculture Policy is to have a nation that enjoys food security and sustainable growth and development. The policy goal is to contribute to the attainment of national food security, poverty reduction and national economic development as outlined in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS).

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security realizes that to attain this goal in the country requires concerted effort by all players in the sector with a common vision. The National Agriculture Policy will act as a guiding principle to all players as we move together in achieving the MGDS and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the short, medium and long term.

The Ministry appeals to all stakeholders to work together in Agriculture sector as it is the backbone of Malawi's economy. The Government endeavors to use resources in the budget in the implementation of this policy within the Agriculture Sector Wide Approach (ASWAP) framework which is now taking the programme approach to implement all its activities and pulling resources together.

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Secretary for Agriculture and Food Security  
July 2010

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Importance of agriculture in Malawi**

- 1.1.1. Since independence in 1964, the agricultural sector has remained the mainstay of Malawi's economy as it accounts between 36 and 39 percent of the GDP, employs about 80 percent of the workforce, accounts for over 80 percent of foreign exchange earnings, and contributes significantly to national and household food security.
- 1.1.2. The agricultural sector has two main sub-sectors - the smallholder sub-sector contributing more than 70 percent and the estate sub-sector that contributes less than 30 percent to agricultural GDP. Smallholders cultivate mainly food crops such as maize, the main staple grain, cassava and sweet potatoes to meet subsistence requirements, while the estate sector focuses on high value cash crops for export such as tobacco, tea, sugar, coffee and macadamia. Smallholder farmers cultivate small and fragmented land holdings under customary land tenure with yields lower than in the estate sector.
- 1.1.3. In Malawi, the total area under cultivation is estimated at 2.2-2.5 million hectares, of which more than 90 percent is in small farms. It is estimated that the potential agricultural land is about 4.7 million hectares suitable for rainfed, dimba, or wetland cultivation, irrigated land, and plantations plus 0.9 million hectares of grassland. This means that about half of Malawi's land area can be cropped, of which only about half is currently under crops.
- 1.1.4. Development resources, strategies and policies in Malawi since independence have been heavily biased towards agricultural development. While the country has gone through different periods of viable agricultural sector accompanied by food insecurity, recently the sector has had impressive growth trends which need to be supported with right policy and institutional environment.
- 1.1.5. Agricultural exports have remained undiversified, with little value addition. About 40 percent of the population live below the national poverty line (MK44 or UD\$0.3 per person per day) with 22.4 percent barely surviving. Socio-economic indicators illustrate the depth and intractability of poverty. For example, the levels of malnutrition remain high with 43.2 per cent of under-five children stunted and 22 per cent underweight.
- 1.1.6. The country's macroeconomic performance has been strong for the past three years due to sound economic policies pursued by the government and good performance in the agricultural sector. Malawi has registered a real GDP average growth of 7.5 percent and average inflation rate of below 10.9 percent for the past five years.

### **1.2 Evolution of agricultural policy in Malawi**

- 1.2.1 Malawi's post independence agricultural strategy has been characterized by a dual policy of attainment of national food self sufficiency through enhancement of the smallholder agriculture and rapid economic growth through estate production with almost all major agricultural programmes, strategies and action plans being guided by the food security policy.
- 1.2.2 From the mid 1980s, the Malawi Government reviewed its role from that of being both a policy formulator and implementer to that of policy regulator under the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). Through this, all restrictions on production of some commodities like burley tobacco by smallholder farmers were removed to accord them with opportunities to enhance their incomes. The other important policy reforms are the removal of agricultural input and output marketing controls, price decontrols, and the commercialization of parastatals, amongst others.
- 1.2.3 In 1995, the government developed the Agriculture and Livestock Development Strategy and Action Plan (ALDSAP) to provide a framework for coordinating the implementation

of various policy initiatives. Much as the ALDSAP sought to outline the aspirations for the attainment of the sector's objectives, its implementation registered little success because, amongst other reasons, the sector's policies and strategies were numerous and often overlapping.

- 1.2.4 In 1999, the government undertook a comprehensive review of all agricultural sector policies under the Malawi Agricultural Sector Investment Programme (MASIP). Unfortunately, the review never translated into a coherent policy. Meanwhile, the sector has several sub-sector policy documents. These policies include the Land Resource Conservation Policy, the New Agriculture Extension Policy, the Research Master Plan, the HIV and AIDS Policy for the Agricultural sector, the Livestock Development Policy and the Irrigation Policy, amongst others.
- 1.2.5 In addition, the prevailing socioeconomic environment poses several challenges that need thorough considerations to achieve sustainable growth and development of the agricultural sector. In the face of these challenges, the Ministry, through the facilitation of MASIP developed the Agricultural Development Program (ADP) in 2006. The ADP sought to enhance the coordination in implementation of sector priority programmes by all stakeholders.
- 1.2.6 However, in 2007-2009, the Malawi Government formulated a sector-wide program, the Agricultural Sector Wide Approach (ASWAp) to harmonise investment and support programs in agriculture based on their highest potential for contributing to food security and agricultural growth in the next five years. The ASWAp is a prioritised results-oriented framework for implementing the agricultural components of the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS).

### **1.3 Rationale for the policy development**

The development of the National Agricultural Policy comes against the background of the fact that the sector has been operating without a coherent national agricultural policy. In this respect, the critical factors necessitating the development of the policy are as follows:

- Dynamics in the policy environment at the national and international levels have significant bearing on the agricultural sector. There is need for a policy framework to guide the sector's operations in the face of the different policy developments that affect productivity of agriculture technologies which, amongst others, include climate change, biofuels, gender, HIV and AIDS.
- The strong linkages between the agricultural sector and other sectors and the implications for national economic growth and development. Based on the realization of such critical linkages, there have been calls for clear and comprehensive policy guidance for the sector so that it ensures continued positive contribution of the sector while other sectors continue to grow;
- To provide a premise for the development of sub-sectoral or industry specific policies and legal frameworks. In the process, the policy aims at promoting sub-sectoral linkages which have failed to take place in the absence of an overarching sectoral policy;
- To provide an outline of institutional linkages amongst various stakeholders (public or private) which have a significant bearing on the agricultural sector. It is recognized that institutional linkages are dynamic and evolve depending upon the prevailing national and international social, economic, political and cultural environment.

### **1.4 Guiding Principles**

The Policy builds on the various policy statements that already exist in the sector and offers actions that need to be taken to improve agriculture productivity in the wake of various national, regional and global opportunities and challenges.

- **Realignment to regional and international policies.** The Policy realigns itself to the regional and international policies on agriculture, climate change and environmental management issues notably the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), an agricultural programme for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)/African Union (AU). CAADP was endorsed by African Governments with the aim of increasing public investment in agriculture by a minimum of 10 percent of the national budgets in order to achieve an annual growth in agricultural productivity by 6 percent.
- **Responsiveness to gender in agricultural and rural development.** The Policy recognizes the need for gender equality as a fundamental value in provision of agriculture services to ensure equal participation of all gender categories.
- **Evidenced-based decision making.** All stakeholders in agricultural sector will be encouraged to make decisions that are based on analysis of issues using internationally acceptable analysis tools and practices.
- **Policy and institutional harmonization.** The Policy seeks to promote harmonization of various sub-sectoral policies to eliminate overlaps and promote complementarities within the sector in line with the overarching national development aspirations. The policy is premised on the spirit of institutional partnerships within the sector and with other stakeholders in order to ensure efficiency in service delivery.
- **Multi-stakeholder focus.** The Malawi Government's intention is that all the service providers who play key roles in the development of the sector are fully recognized especially as they actively take part in the implementation of guidelines laid down in this policy.
- **Demand-driven approach.** In line with the democratization process and other national policies such as decentralization policy, this policy seeks to ensure that all services to the different farmers are according to their needs.
- **Building on the strength of previous policy initiatives.** The Policy builds on the national experiences in the implementation of various policy initiatives undertaken in the agricultural sector in Malawi, such as the Agriculture and Livestock Development Strategy and Action of 1994, the review of Malawi Agricultural sector Investment Programmes (MASIP) in 1999 and the Agricultural sector Wide Approach (ASWAp) in 2008.

## 2.0 THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL POLICY

### 2.1 Vision

A nation that enjoys food security and sustainable agricultural growth and development.

### 2.2 Policy Goal

To contribute to the attainment of national food security, poverty reduction and national economic development objectives as outlined in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS).

### 2.3 Mission

To promote agricultural productivity and sustainable management of land resources to achieve national food sovereignty, increased incomes and ensure sustainable socio-economic growth and development.

## **2.5 Specific Policy Objectives**

The National Agricultural Policy seeks to raise the profile of the agricultural sector so that the NAP effectively contributes to the national development aspirations of turning the country from a predominantly consuming to a producing and exporting nation targeting all value chain stages. This would be achieved through:

- Facilitating the creation of a conducive and supportive policy environment for effective development of the agricultural sector throughout all stages of the value chain;
- Strengthening the capacity of the stakeholders in the sector in provision of agricultural services;
- Enhancement of coordination and collaboration amongst relevant stakeholders operating in different sub-sectors of the sector;
- Provision of clear strategic policy direction to all stakeholders involved in sector issues along the value chain stages.

## **3.0 THEMATIC AREAS OF THE POLICY**

### **3.1 INPUTS USE AND MARKETS**

#### **3.1.1 Fertilizer**

##### **3.1.1.1 Current Situation**

In Malawi, the nutrient use per hectare of inorganic fertilizer is only around 43 kg on average. This is much lower than the world's average of 100 kg per ha and other developing countries. Over the years, national fertilizer sales have been around 186,000 metric tons per annum, with sales reaching as far as 215,000 metric tons. Based on the area under cultivation, if farmers apply recommended rates, potential fertilizer consumption in Malawi could reach more than 547,000 metric tons. However, the government is promoting the use of organic fertilizers and agro-forestry technologies in order to complement imported inorganic fertilizers.

Before the liberalization of inputs markets in the 1980s, procurement and distribution of inputs to smallholder farmers was done by government-controlled companies. However, with liberalization since the mid 1990s, there has been a significant increase in private sector participation in agro-input trading with private firms at times importing 92 percent of the fertilizers sold in Malawi.

##### **3.1.1.2 Issues from the current situation**

The fertilizer industry in Malawi faces a host of demand and supply side constraints which include high fertilizer prices, climate change and extreme weather events (drought and floods), inadequate farmers' knowledge of the technical aspects of the different fertilizers, quality of fertilizers, limited availability of credit, procurement modalities and transportation issues, among others.



### **3.1.1.3 Policy actions to improve fertilizer marketing and application**

- Finalize and implement the National Fertilizer Policy developed in 2006.
- Ensure that the implementation of the public interventions in the industry such as Agriculture Inputs Subsidy Programme harness the development of the private sector, i.e., implementing market friendly public interventions.
- Review and reformulate the fertilizer legislation and regulations governing formulation, procurement and distribution of fertilizer.
- Building the capacity of the different cadres of the private sector involved in fertilizer industry such as agro-input dealers and the middle scale private traders.
- Enhance skills and knowledge base of the public and private technical staff and farmers in the use of organic and inorganic fertilizer and other inputs.
- Scale up public investment in road and transport infrastructure and access routes to rural areas.
- Promotion of sustainable land and water management such as agroforestry technologies and organic farming among farmers in order to reduce dependency on chemical fertilizers and improve soil structure.
- Promote credit facilities for farmers to purchase inputs.
- Increase local capacity for manufacturing blending fertilisers in the country.

### **3.1.2 The seed sector**

#### **3.1.2.1 Current situation**

Owing to the market reforms under the SAPs implemented from the mid-1990s, there have been huge changes in seed marketing. Prior to that, in the early 1990s, ADMARC dominated seed sales to smallholders. With reforms, farmers buy hybrid maize seeds from more than 1000 private and public outlets throughout the country. There are three major channels for seed distribution from seed growers to Malawi farmers and these include: (a) informal farmer-to-farmer sale; (b) government purchase and distribution through non-market channels (e.g., free seed); and (c) seed company distribution through stores outlets.

With respect to market size, from a regional perspective Malawi has a medium-sized market, larger than some other countries such as Mozambique, Tanzania, and Uganda but smaller than Zimbabwe and South Africa. Malawi's total annual commercial seed sales through government and donor programs as well as direct sales to farmers through private markets are about 1.2 million tones. Government seed purchases over the years have inflated the commercial sales and in the absence of government purchases, commercial seed sales may be expected at roughly one-half the current total.

In terms of policy, major changes include revision of Seed Act in mid 1990s to open the market allowing companies to produce and sell seed without government licenses and to introduce new varieties for all crops except hybrid maize, hybrid sunflower, and tobacco without government tests and approvals.

#### **3.1.2.2 Issues from the current situation**

- The liberalization process has seen the emergency of a private sector market entry in the seed industry although there are few suppliers in relation to the number of customers. As such, some aspects of seed production are not yet well developed.

Much of the seed is produced in a handful of large estates contracted by these companies.

- The seed companies have a challenge of not serving some important seed sub-markets. There is little or no commercial sale of low value open-pollinated varieties (OPV) seeds for crops such as groundnut, sugar beans, rice, pigeon pea, chick pea, and OPV maize.
- At times, government and NGO interventions for small-scale seed production have faced challenges. For example, prices offered for seed multiplication are far below the commercial seed prices. Related to this is the fact that there is lack of private wholesale/retail trade for seed such as rice, beans and groundnuts.
- As already described, Malawi does not yet have a PVP law, which means that Malawi cannot be a member of UPOV, a treaty organization whose members include most of the major seed producing and trading countries in the world.
- Weak entrepreneur and dealer knowledge about seed industry options has also been noted in the seed industry. Entrepreneurs need to learn how to establish a brand name, advertise and set up demonstration plots to expand market shares, setting contract arrangements with farmers for seed production, seed processing, packaging and marketing through independent retail outlets.
- Weak farmer knowledge about crop and variety options. The activities to inform farmers about the available new varieties through more demonstrations, radio and television are far inadequate.

### **3.1.2.3 Policy actions to improve seed situation**

- Review the Seed legislation and policy to develop penalties for mishandling of seed samples and seed registers, access to seed information, sale of seed, registration of growers, and verification of seed sources, and any other emerging issues in the industry.
- Promote a competitive seed industry while ensuring that only varieties that are approved for release and notified in the variety list are sold on the market.
- Establish and maintain sufficient number of well-equipped seed testing laboratories in Malawi.
- Regularly develop and update quality seed and specify minimum standards to be adhered to by all stakeholders.
- Strengthen the institutional framework for the management of seed matters in Malawi especially through public–private partnerships.
- Ensure that regional and international agreements on seed are adhered to by all partners concerned.

## **3.1.3 Herbicides and fungicides**

### **3.1.3.1 Current situation**

Plant pests and diseases are common and on the rise in Malawi. There are no systematic estimates of pest-induced losses in the country, particularly in the smallholder sector. Nevertheless, anecdotal evidence suggests that crop losses due to pests can reach as high as 30-40 percent. As a result, pest management technologies need to be enhanced in Malawi to increase agricultural productivity. There are well over 100 different types of pesticides that are used by farmers in Malawi.

For many years, pest management in Malawi has concentrated on exclusive use of chemical pesticides on a wide array of pests in agriculture. These pesticides are used to control weeds, outbreaks of locusts, green edible grasshoppers and army worms, as well as weevils on stored maize, maize grain borers and gray leaf spot in the fields, citrus flies, and tomatoes red spot mites. The Malawi Pesticides Control Board has been established by an act of Parliament to oversee the stakeholder operations in the industry.

### **3.1.3.2 Supply-side issues**

- Presently, Malawi has no pesticide production or formulation facility. As such, pesticides are imported into the country from neighboring countries mainly through direct bulk importation of ready-to-use formulations. Importing companies repack products to suit individual needs.
- The importing companies mostly cater for the estate sector. Most of the outlets serve urban areas leaving out the rural areas where the bulk of agriculture production activities take place.
- The composition of private companies and their relative importance is dynamic in the sense that over time there are companies that have exited the market. Others sell farm inputs as a side business.
- Besides the formal sector, there exist significant informal and unrecorded markets where products illegally imported are sold in the country.

### **3.1.3.3 Demand side issues**

- Limited crop diversification, particularly in the smallholder sector. Maize remains the dominant crop in the smallholder sector in Malawi. Diversification into other crops will not only increase farmers' purchasing power, but also the scope of crops on which farmers can use inputs.
- The failure of the private sector to recognize the needs of smallholder farmers in terms of packaging, delivery timing and proximity. Most of the major companies continue to be less enthusiastic to encourage small-scale retailing of inputs due to traders' creditworthiness, lack of warehouses and training for product handling.
- Limited access to seasonal input credits. It is estimated that about 60 percent of the rural population is poorly capitalized, and thereby have limited resources to purchase inputs from their own savings. Currently there exists very few credit facilities available to farmers.

### **3.1.3.4 Policy actions to improve herbicides and fungicides marketing and application**

- Strengthen the capacity of the Malawi Pesticides Control Board to effectively control and manage import, export, manufacture, distribution, storage, disposal and use of pesticides.
- Develop the capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security and the Pesticides Control Board to effectively conduct sensitization campaigns on the economic importance and application of different pesticides in Malawi.
- Ensure that issues of pesticides use are in line with the National Environmental Management Policy and Act.
- Promote public-private partnerships in pesticides management issues;
- Develop and implement a National Pesticides Policy that would lay out the legal framework on pesticides.
- Promote credit facilities for farmers to purchase pesticides

### **3.1.4 Livestock feeds**

#### **3.1.4.1 Current situation**

The beef sector has low population but is growing currently at 2% whilst the dairy sector at 15%. The small ruminants especially goats are growing at 17% while poultry is growing at 36%. Rapid expansion and intensification of livestock production, especially poultry, have led to a sharp increase in requirements for concentrates. Consequently, the country has over the years witnessed increases in the requirements for the supply of protein sources. Oilseed meals and grain legumes form the bulk of plant protein used in livestock feeds. The main source of plant protein used is soybean meal, most of which is the full fat type. Other plant protein sources include sunflower, cottonseed and groundnut cakes. There is apparently very little use of legumes such as pigeon peas, cowpeas, and chickpeas.

In fact, soybean meal is used most extensively as a source of protein, especially in poultry diets, and accounts for more than 70 percent of the protein source used in compound feeds for poultry and other livestock. Protein feed sources in Malawi are either of plant or animal origin. The commonly available type of animal protein is fishmeal which is produced from a mixture of fish remnants, non-gradable fish and/or broken fish pieces. However, fishmeal is generally expensive and its use in animal feed is limited. While animal by-products from processing plants/slaughter houses such as meat and bone meal are good alternatives to fishmeal but their use is limited due to low supply as a result of lack of appropriate processing facilities in slaughter houses.

#### **3.1.4.2 Issues from the current situation**

- Of the several challenges facing the livestock industry, low livestock numbers and lack of quality fodder and feed at affordable prices is one of the major problems. This leads to low productivity and hence the livestock sector contributes less than its potential to national economic and agricultural growth.
- There are also limited laboratory facilities and chemicals for feed analyses.
- While other legumes such as beans, pigeon peas, groundnut and cowpeas could be used as livestock feed, their use is rather limited because these feed are used for human consumption; lack of processing facilities; high cost of transport from areas of production to the location of feed mills; low price that farmers receive from the sale of these products to the animal feed industry; and low domestic production.
- Significant variations in prices of feed from feed manufacturing companies are observed and the variations depend on the source of ingredients and the geographic location of the companies. Farmers in the countryside face significantly higher costs of feed than those within towns.
- Weak enforcement of regulation on feed quality monitoring.

#### **3.1.4.3 Policy actions to improve feedstock availability and use**

- Undertake a registration of fodder crops;
- Ensure that growth stimulators and unapproved additives are not used in livestock industry;
- Promote quality feeds and livestock feeding regime;
- Regularly monitor feed quality production activities to ensure that they conform with the laid down standards;

- Promote the designation of some wetlands for controlled grazing to minimize environmental degradation.
- Promote increased production of fodder and legumes for livestock feeds and human consumption.
- Provide sustainable feed quality analysis and monitoring services

## **3.2 AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION**

### **3.2.1 Food and Nutrition Security**

#### **3.2.1.1 Current Situation**

Prior to 2004, the country has been facing cycles of food insecurity due to the implementation of the structural adjustment programme which reduced government's direct support to the agricultural sector and liberalised the agricultural input and output markets. In the recent past, Malawi has made significant progress in achieving national as well as household food security. For the past years, the country has achieved a high rate of agricultural production and food security due to favourable climate and the agricultural subsidy program. The government is also supporting the development of viable small, medium and large scale irrigation schemes to reduce dependence on rain fed agriculture. Malawi is committed to reduce by half the proportion of the population that suffers from extreme poverty and hunger and to improve their nutritional status by the year 2015.

With respect to nutrition security, the government recognizes that nutrition security is fundamentally important for a productive nation. In this vein, the government is providing nutrition support to people living with HIV and AIDS and is implementing a number of nutrition programs to reduce incidences of nutritional disorders.

#### **3.2.1.2 Policy objective**

To improve food security and nutritional status of all people in Malawi through sound policies, plans and programmes for provision of quality nutrition services in order to prevent nutrition related disorders among all Malawians.

#### **3.2.1.3 Policy actions to achieve the policy objective**

- Develop programmes that reduce dependency on rain-fed agriculture such as the Malawi Greenbelt Initiative.
- Provide support to vulnerable households with production enhancing technologies through direct government interventions, donors and Non Governmental Organisations.
- Promote the production of diverse food crops, fish and livestock to ensure household and national food security
- Minimize pre-harvest and post- harvest losses through improved technologies for storage preservation, product development, food processing, construction of metallic silos and maintenance of adequate stocks in Strategic Grain Reserves to ensure national and household food security.
- To promote the adoption of healthy lifestyle and dietary habits among men, women, boys and girls.

- Develop sector guidelines for mitigating natural disasters aligned to national policy and programmes.
- Promote diversification of eating habits.

### **3.2.2. Agricultural Research and Development**

#### **3.2.2.1. Current Situation**

Agricultural research has the potential to significantly assist in reducing rural poverty by generating information and technologies that would minimize production risks, reduce the deterioration of natural resources and increase crop and livestock productivity. There is a proliferation of sub-sector agricultural research service providers, each having its own mandate, policies and strategies. These include the Department of Agricultural Research Services, Department of Fisheries, Forestry Research Institute of Malawi, the Malawi Industrial Research and Technology Development Centre, Department of Animal Health and Livestock Development (animal disease research), the University of Malawi, the International Agricultural Research Centers (CGIARs), private institutions (companies and research institutions) and some non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Over the years, several varieties of different crops and livestock breeds have been developed and tested through agricultural research. In addition, various institutions have conducted numerous agronomic and management research to improve soil and water management, generation of technologies to reduce the use of chemical fertilizers and to reduce environmental degradation.

Significant positive impacts have been registered from these technologies. Government is seeking to enhance the impacts of the technologies through the right supportive environment (e.g. policy support, enhanced promotion, markets etc) and continuous improvement in technology generation.

#### **3.2.2.2. Issues from the Current Situation**

- The proliferation of sub-sector agricultural research services providers has resulted in duplication of research efforts; production and release of conflicting technologies; inefficient utilization of resources; lack of synergy; and promotion of unproven technologies.
- Lack of legal framework for the Agricultural Technology Clearing Committee (ATCC) to protect farmers and other stakeholders from unproven technologies.
- Inadequate Research – Extension – Farmer and other service providers linkage resulting in low technology adoption.
- Inadequate capacity to undertake strategic and demand driven agricultural research in light of topical and emerging issues including climate change.
- Inadequate capacity to undertake agricultural biotechnology research and assessment of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs).
- Inadequate capacity to undertake regulatory services such as produce and quarantine services.

- Inadequate capacity to undertake seed quality control services.
- Inadequate capacity to conserve animal and plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.
- Inadequate production technologies to backstop irrigation farming.

#### **3.2.2.3. Policy Objective:**

To promote coordinated strategic, applied, demand-driven and market oriented, environmentally and user friendly research that will generate information and technologies which can be directly utilized by the estate and smallholder farmers to solve their technical production problems, improve agricultural productivity and reduce environmental degradation.

#### **3.2.2.4. Policy actions to achieve the policy objective**

- Develop a policy framework to harmonise and coordinate agricultural research and technology development to promote efficiencies and synergies in agricultural research and technology development in Malawi.
- Develop legal framework for the Agricultural Technology Clearing Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security to protect farmers and other stakeholders from unproven technologies.
- Build capacity for biotechnology research and development.
- Strengthen the Research – Extension – Farmer-and other service providers’ linkage to increase uptake of technologies.
- Promote stability of agricultural production by developing varieties of crops which are tolerant to drought and resistant to pests and diseases and livestock breeds of wider adaptation.
- Improve cultural practices and integrated pest management systems for all crops, pastures and livestock to increase and sustain yields.
- Improve multiple cropping system combinations for cereals, legumes, root and tuber crops, pastures and different species of livestock enterprise for optimum yield and conservation of natural resources.

### **3.2.2 Agricultural Extension**

#### **3.2.3.1 Issues**

The provision of agriculture extension services in Malawi needs to be reformed in line with new challenges and trends. These include (a) the democratization process that empowers farmers to demand more services from the public sector (b) market liberalization that requires farmers to acquire more skills in producing commodities for different markets (c) reduction in farm labour and agricultural staff due to nutrition and HIV and AIDS and poor working conditions (d) decentralization process that now requires that local assemblies and institutions play a greater role in the sector and (e) shrinking public resources. The challenges faced in the provision of agriculture extension services have necessitated a shift in the extension policy from the top down, biased towards rural communities and smallholder sector, public sector-led to pluralistic and demand-driven extension service.

### **3.2.3.2 Policy Objective**

To promote high quality pluralistic decentralized and demand driven extension services.

### **3.2.3.3 Policy Actions to Achieve the Policy Objective**

The policy actions for achieving pluralistic and demand-driven extension services are as follows:

- To provide policy guidelines to standardize the provision of agriculture extension services.
- Initiate and strengthen the co-ordination and collaboration amongst stakeholders.
- Promoting gender equality and equity in agricultural extension service provision through gender advocacy and community empowerment to address poverty, malnutrition, environment and HIV and AIDS concerns.
- Promote agricultural extension pluralism using various methods to accommodate different players and using various methods in the provision and delivery of agricultural extension in Malawi with special emphasis on the strengthening of farmer organizations.
- Setting, monitoring and evaluating standards for the quality of agricultural extension services.
- Institutionalise villages as entry points and organizing base for packaging and organizing extension packages.
- District assemblies to strengthen the district agriculture extension service support
- To harmonize linkages between extension and research through demonstration, field days
- To promote use of various methods and approaches to strengthen farmer organisations.

## **3.2.4 Land Resources Management**

### **3.2.4.1 Issues**

Owing to rapid population growth, Malawi is experiencing rapid inter-generational subdivision of land holdings for farming. This leads to declining per capita arable land holdings which expose rural farmers to food insecurity. There is need to review and strengthen guidelines on land use and management measures that will balance and regulate competing land use for various activities such as human settlements, infrastructure developments and environmental conservation.

### **3.2.4.2 Policy Objective**

The policy seeks to promote an efficient, diversified and sustainable use of land resources both for agriculture and other uses to avoid land use conflicts and ensure sustainable socio-economic development.

### **3.2.4.3 Policy Actions to Achieve the Policy Objective**

- To balance land requirements for different land uses according to land suitability and capability, while regulating competing land demands for different sectors such as biofuels development;



- Designate, through a consultative process, with land users, the best use of land for optimal socio-economic development;
- Provide guidelines and strategies for the sustainable utilization of the land resource base;
- Define the roles of different players in land management and guide the formulation and/or review of the sectoral policies and legislation related to land use and its management for sustainability.
- Strengthen coordination amongst stakeholders involved in land resource management issues and build the capacity of coordinating institutions such as the Department of Lands.
- Formulate legal frameworks to support land resource conservation and management policies such as conservation agriculture.

### **3.2.5 Crop Production**

#### **3.2.5.1 CURRENT SITUATION**

Over the past decades the country experienced chronic food shortage due to low agricultural production. This was due to implementation of programmes that were less responsive to increased crop production and productivity. Recently, the government introduced targeted farm input subsidy programme which has made the country to produce surplus maize and other crop commodities. It is therefore important to consolidate and sustain these gains in production and productivity to solidify the economic growth of the country.

#### **3.2.5.2 ISSUES**

While the country has attained food security, there are still pockets of households that face chronic food insecurity. This is due to a number of factors among which are:

- Inadequate access to farm technologies
- Pre and post harvest crop losses
- Draggery and limited labor
- Extreme weather events (dry spells, floods)
- Depressed land sizes due to increase in population
- Low soil fertility due to land degradation
- Limited credit facilities to enable farmers obtain modern inputs

Despite the country's agro ecological diversity providing a conducive environment for crop diversification, some crops are grown in unsuitable areas resulting in poor yields and returns to investments. In addition, there is lack of programmes that can enhance value addition to crop products thereby making the sector not realizing its full potential.

#### **3.2.5.3. POLICY OBJECTIVE**

To promote a balanced and diversified production of food and cash crops amongst the farmers to meet the country's requirements for food, foreign exchange and raising rural incomes while maintaining the productive potential of the land.

### **3.2.5.3 POLICY ACTIONS**

- Promote farm mechanization to enhance efficiency and productivity in agriculture.
- Promote the production of high value crops amongst smallholder and estate farmers to provide equal opportunities of increasing incomes to farmers.
- Promote crop production in areas which have suitable agro-ecological factors with appropriate farming systems such as area specific fertilizer and seed recommendations to suit varying topographic conditions.
- Promote the use of integrated pest and disease management technologies to enhance crop productivity.
- Diversify both food and cash crops for food security, promoting import substitution of expanding exports while accommodating changing market conditions.
- Transfer appropriate technologies to farmers in order to improve crop yields.
- Promote seasonal and medium term credit facilities to farmers for farm inputs such as fertilizers, seed and pesticides. This shall be facilitated through loans from village banks and other banking institutions. There is need to establish preferential financing facility for large and medium scale farming.
- Promote value addition and preservation of food crops through enhancement of appropriate agro processing and crop storage facilities such as small and large silos.
- Promote irrigation agronomy
- Promote the production of drought tolerant crops such as cassava, sweet potatoes, millet, sorghum and yams.
- Promote production of fruits and vegetables in order to improve nutrition and incomes of farmers. Focus shall also be made on the production of indigenous vegetables and spices such as jinger, turmeric and garlic.
- Promote production of strategic crops such as maize, cotton and tobacco.
- Intensify production of legumes in order to improve nutrition of Malawians. Focus will also be made in the production of orphan crops such as bambara nuts.
- Enhance appropriate crop mixes to ensure good returns in the green belt areas.
- Strengthen capacity of crop commodity farmer groups to respond to changing circumstances in crop production.
- Strengthen staff capacity to enable them articulate crop production delivery services.

### **3.2.6 Fisheries and Aquaculture Development**

#### **3.2.6.1 Issues**

Fish provides approximately 70 percent of dietary animal protein and 40 percent of the total protein intake for the majority of the rural poor in Malawi. It is also a source of essential minerals and vitamins which are available throughout the year and accessible to the majority of the people. As such, the fisheries industry and aquaculture guarantees a nutritionally balanced diet to a population suffering from high levels of malnutrition.

In addition, the fisheries sector provides employment opportunities to over 400,000 people and supports about 14 percent of Malawi population which resides along the lakeshores of Lake Malawi through fishing, processing, marketing, fishing gear construction, boat building and other ancillary activities. There are also over 5,000 small scale pond fish farmers and 5 emerging large scale commercial fish farmers. The commercial fish farmers are engaged in three fish production systems that include pond, cage and intensive recirculation fish culture. However the sector faces several challenges

such as overfishing, habitat destruction, illegal fishing, inadequate appropriate fishing equipment and gear technology to tap deep water fish resources. In aquaculture, major constraints include low investments, poor quality fingerlings and feed and inadequate professionals.

### **3.2.6.2 Policy objective**

To maximize the sustainable yield from the national waters of Malawi and man-made water bodies. The government further seeks to improve the efficiency of exploitation, processing and marketing of quality fish products, promote investment in the fishing industry, rural fish farming units and exploit all opportunities to expand existing and develop new aquatic resources.

### **3.2.6.3 Policy actions to achieve the policy objective**

- Foster greater community involvement in fish resource management to improve the effectiveness and appropriateness of management initiatives
- Effectively monitor and, where appropriate, control the exploitation of fish, directing and regulating production within sustainable limits for each fishery and using the law to safeguard the resources from any other threat.
- Undertake research programmes in order to identify and quantify under-utilized fish resources, particularly those in the offshore waters of Lake Malawi and effectively disseminate results of research and development to all key stakeholders for improved fisheries management, fishing, fish handling and processing techniques;
- Develop the institutional capacity of the fisheries sub-sector for purposes of increased efficiency in enforcement of regulatory mechanisms, improved coordination and management of the fisheries sector.
- Promote fish production from smallholder and large fish farming operations;
- Prohibit the introduction of live exotic fish species into the country's water bodies, unless and until scientific evidence justifies otherwise.
- Facilitate fisher and fish farmer access to capital for increased fish production
- Promote the development and supply of low cost feeds for fish farming
- Promote aquaculture development as a means of raising rural farm incomes and increasing fish supply in rural areas to sustain food security
- Promote aquaculture development through public private partnerships
- Undertake data collection in capture fisheries and aquaculture and markets
- Undertake fish quality programmes to reduce post harvest losses
- Promote investment in the development capture fisheries and aquaculture Promote other production systems such as cage and intensive fish culture
- Promote the establishment of certified hatcheries and procurement of fingerlings from such facilities
- Expand and intensify fishing equipment and gear technology for deep lake fishing in Lake Malawi to increase fish catch.

## **3.2.7 Livestock**

### **3.2.7.1 Issues**

The livestock industry face a number of challenges which include low livestock population, poor animal husbandry and health care resulting in high mortality rate of young stock; inadequate participation of private sector in livestock production; inadequate

human capacity at all levels of the industry; rising costs of feed, drugs and other inputs; inadequate health and diagnostic services; land pressure and limited grazing areas, limited ownership and number of breeding stock amongst others.

### **3.2.7.2 Policy objective**

In response to the challenges facing the livestock industry in Malawi, the government seeks to improve livestock productivity through a well organized and developed value chain system.

### **3.2.7.3 Policy actions to achieve the policy objective:**

- Promote sustainable livestock production and productivity through the use of environmentally friendly and cost effective technologies;
- Broaden livestock ownership to include the poorest of the poor;
- Modernize the livestock sector through public-private partnerships that would involve the semi-commercial sectors of the industry;
- Conserve and effectively utilize the existing biodiversity of the indigenous livestock breeds;
- Undertake an effective registration of exotic breeds with superior characteristics and develop appropriate breeding strategies.
- Promote the use of artificial insemination of approved and registered cattle breeds with registered sources;
- Promote the consumption of milk and milk products amongst the local populace;
- Encourage smallholder farmers to demarcate communal grazing areas for sustainable utilization in line with existing land policies;
- Stop the practices that cause animal suffering caused by inhuman handling, transportation, slaughter and poor housing of animals.
- Promote farmer organizations with livestock agri-business skills;
- Ensure adequate and timely provision of livestock market information to all stakeholders;
- Strengthen human capacity to deal with issues and challenges facing the industry at various stages;
- Promote availability of low cost quality feeds;
- Promote viable drug supply system;
- Establish and improve abattoirs, slaughter slabs and transportation system for livestock and livestock products;
- Facilitate farmer access to capital for livestock production.
- Promote intensive management and stall feeding
- Protection of the national herd/flock against trade sensitive diseases and protect human population from zoonoses and food borne diseases.
- Control production diseases to improve animal productivity
- Promote large – scale commercial livestock farming

## **3.3 AGRICULTURAL MARKETS DEVELOPMENT**

### **3.3.1 Marketing Issues**

The Government recognizes that inadequate access to markets is one of the binding constraints to increasing and reducing fluctuations in smallholder productivity and increasing smallholder share of the gross domestic product (GDP). Current efforts

regarding improvement of access to markets include (a) reviewing marketing and pricing policies of various commodities of strategic importance (b) promoting contract farming initiatives, and (c) collecting and disseminating market information to stakeholders.

In terms of contract farming, the Ministry has developed a Contract Farming Strategy which is awaiting final approval by cabinet. Implementation has, however, started especially for maize and cash crop production. With respect to market information, the Ministry collects weekly prices from different markets under the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS). In addition, private and civil society organizations also operate agricultural market information systems, including the Initiative for Development and Equity in African Agriculture (IDEAA) through the Malawi Agriculture Commodity Exchange Project (MACE) and Agriculture Commodity Exchange collect and disseminate agricultural market information. Apparently, market information services are provided in uncoordinated manner, and the impact of initiative on productivity of producers and traders has not been established.

### **3.3.2 Policy Objectives**

In light of the foregoing, the Government policy objective is to build the capacity of farmers especially smallholder farmers to make informed decisions on the production and marketing aspects of an agricultural enterprise. Ultimately, this would result in the increased volume of marketed agricultural commodities across the value chain. The government and other service providers undertake to:

- Effectively conduct agricultural market research which involves the collection and dissemination of information on consumer demand and quality requirements for different crops. One of the outcomes of this activity would be to develop a profile of agricultural enterprises that generate adequate revenue to cover costs and provide return to investment.
- Improvement of the collection and dissemination of agriculture price information through the establishment of automated Agriculture Market Information System (AMIS) to facilitate timely information collection and dissemination.
- Develop database and the establishment of agri-business information centers across the country.

### **3.3.3 Policy actions to achieve the policy objective**

- Improving coordination of stakeholders in agricultural market information systems.
- Building the capacity of stakeholders in agricultural market information systems and appreciation of domestic and international policy and legal framework.
- Integrating smallholder farmers into domestic and international agricultural markets by, amongst others, ensuring access to up to date information on consumer tastes and market practices and procedure.

## **3.4 GENDER, HIV AND AIDS AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **3.4.1 Issues**

With the estimated 10 percent infection rate in the rural areas where the bulk of agriculture production and marketing activities take place, the HIV and AIDS pandemic has created labour supply challenges. Most farmers, especially women farmers, spend most of their time caring for the sick, thus spending less time tending to their agricultural

enterprises. This is especially worse for groups such as widows, orphans, the elderly and the sick, because they cannot easily access productive resources such as labour.

The public extension service providers namely the Ministry staff is not spared from the HIV and AIDS impacts. Most extension workers are getting infected resulting in illnesses and deaths hence the decrease in Ministry's frontline extension staff, which, in turn, makes it difficult for farmers to obtain information about new technologies and agricultural techniques.

The present technology is not adequately responding to issue of gender, HIV and AIDS. As is the case at national level, behavioral change is still a big challenge in the sector.

### **3.4.2 Policy objective**

The policy seeks to ensure that gender, HIV and AIDS issues are fully recognized and mainstreamed into the sector's policies and programs through workplace and farming community interventions.

### **3.4.3 Policy actions to achieve the policy objective**

- Promote inclusion of gender-based issues in the agricultural sector simultaneously with an HIV and AIDS response.
- Undertake action research to identify mechanisms to mitigate the impacts of HIV and AIDS.
- Identify and adopt innovative agricultural interventions for improved health and livelihoods.
- Stimulate the development and use of innovative agricultural interventions for improved health and livelihoods.
- Advocate for legislative and other types of support for the HIV/AIDS policy in the agricultural sector.
- Promote integrated packaging of nutrition, HIV and gender interventions.
- Promote effective mitigation of adverse impacts and resultant gender disparities on productivity and livelihoods.

## **3.5 CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

### **3.5.1 Issues**

The National Programmes of Action (NAPA) stipulates that Malawi is vulnerable to the effects of climate change because of its reliance on rain-fed agriculture. The extreme weather events such as drought and floods have resulted in poor crop yields or total crop failure, leading to serious food shortages, hunger and malnutrition. In addition, flooding has also severely disrupted food production in several districts of the country. The most vulnerable groups are rural communities, especially women, children, female-headed households and the elderly. The link between climate change and agricultural production requires that measures are taken to reduce the impact of climate change and help farmers to adapt to climate change.

### **3.5.2 Policy objective**

Since Malawi has a low economic capacity to cope with climate change, there is a pressing need to plan and implement urgent interventions immediately to minimize future adverse effects of climate change on agriculture.

### **3.5.3 Policy actions to achieve the policy objective**

Proposed measures for adaptation to climate change:

- Improving vulnerability assessment to provide early warning on food security;
- Enhancing food security and developing community-based storage systems for seed and food,
- Improving crop and livestock production through the use of appropriate technologies,
- Increasing resilience of food production systems to erratic rains by promoting sustainable dimba production of maize and vegetables in dambos, wetlands and along river valleys,
- Ensure that all agriculture projects and programmes undertaken in the sector have had environmental impact assessments as required by the Environmental Management Policy and Act and the related international instruments;
- Strengthen the capacity of all stakeholders in issues of mainstreaming environmental management in the agricultural sector;

## **3.6 BIOFUELS AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **3.6.1 Issues**

The global concerns on energy security, food shortages, climate change and increasing oil prices are rising and countries around the world have set their sights on the development of alternative sources of energy. Fuel consumption will therefore continue to play an important role in the Malawi economy as a fuel importing country. Biofuels offer greater opportunities to provide home-made fuel for powering farm tractors, running of irrigation pumps as well as providing lighting and source of energy for agro-processing.

Malawi is one of the few countries that has been exploiting biofuels for many years when a plant was commissioned at Dwangwa in the early 1980s for the production of ethanol. This ethanol is blended with imported fuels for locomotives. This has helped to reduce the volume of imported oil thereby reducing the fuel import bill. Studies in some sub-Saharan African countries have shown that the development of a robust biofuels industry has the potential to create jobs, reduce green house gas emissions and promote rural development by supplying electricity in rural areas with biofuel-powered generators. However, in absence of a regulatory framework, the agricultural sector will face challenges. Some of which include the following:

- Large fertile land being allocated for the growing of energy crops at the expense of food crops. This may result in low production of staple food crops that may lead to food insecurity and exacerbate rural poverty.
- Large-scale production of biofuels may cause the clearing and opening of virgin forests for the production of energy crops to supply feedstocks.
- Exploitation of farmers by large processors where biofuels are produced for the export markets
- Appropriation of large pieces of land by multinational companies that may displace rural dwellers.

### **3.6.2 Policy objective**

To provide alternative fuels to imported fuels for (a) powering farm tractors (b) pumping water for irrigation using biofuel-powered generators and (c) supplying electricity in rural

areas while reducing the negative impact of biofuels development on food security and the environment.

### **3.6.3 Policy actions to achieve the policy objective**

- Provide appropriate resource allocation guidelines to the farmers and private sector on the production of energy crops to ensure that household and national food security needs of the country are not compromised.
- Provide appropriate extension messages for biofuels production to ensure high quality production of biofuels products.
- Undertake research on biofuels technologies so that high efficiency feedstocks are promoted.
- Build a strong institutional framework for dealing with biofuels issues at all levels of the commodity value chain.
- Implementation of partnerships and a mentorship programmes that would empower farm workers and rural citizens to benefit in a manner that would assist them in acquiring agricultural expertise in order to become economically independent.

## **4.0 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK**

The policy will focus its efforts towards building functional expertise areas of influence in the agricultural sector. It will also strengthen linkages with agricultural institutions in order to ensure adequate capacity in the sector. This will be achieved through academic and professional training, institutional and policy coordination

### **4.1 Capacity Building for the Agricultural Sector**

In order to sustain the existing professionalism, the policy recognizes the importance of training at all levels. The policy will ensure that training is encouraged in the entire agricultural sector

### **4.3 Policy Coordination**

The policy recognizes the fact that in the agricultural sector, there are several and diverse decision makers who are crucial for the implementation of agriculture policies and programmes. These include the civil society, private sector, district assemblies, government, parastatal agencies, central and line ministries and departments, and international development partners.

In the case of national policy decisions, it is recognized that policy implementation is a demanding task that requires conviction, consensus and coordination. Needless to say, policy implementation process requires the assent and active participation of decision makers. In this regard, it is further recognized that national public policy implementation requires the development of support institutions such as legislation, administrative decisions and decrees, the development of investment projects and budgets, and the setting up of implementation strategies.

In light of the foregoing, the Government seeks to undertake the following measures aimed at promoting coordination in the agricultural sector:

- a) Create a conducive environment on the participation of non-public stakeholders in agricultural sector delivery.



- b) Encouraging stakeholders involved in agriculture technology generation in the country to have their technologies go through the Agriculture Technology Clearing Committee (ATCC). Requirements for technologies to pass through ATCC are available and all stakeholders involved in technical research activities are urged to make full use of them;
- c) Sensitising stakeholders involved in agriculture extension activities on the importance of having extension messages based on technologies that have been cleared by the Government through the ATCC;
- d) Strengthening the coordination of agricultural extension messages and activities to avoid challenges of conflicts and departure from the acceptable extension procedures and practices;
- e) Building the capacity of stakeholders to ensure that all project proposals follow the minimum acceptable standard of a bankable project based on the existing laid down formats and requirements;
- f) Coordinating and strengthening the agriculture investment issues through mobilization of domestic and international resources for agriculture investments and undertake regular agriculture expenditures analyses to track the impact of public and non-public investments in the agricultural sector. This will ensure transparency and accountability on the resources being committed to the agricultural sector in Malawi.
- g) Coordinating agricultural marketing policy formulation and market research activities such as price setting and announcements, ensuring synergies between domestic production efforts and the international trade practices and agreements. In the same vein, marketing activities of all government and donor funded programmes and projects will be strengthened and well coordinated.
- h) Coordinating and facilitating the monitoring and evaluation of activities in agricultural sector so that they are all brought under a well-organized monitoring system from the national to field level. This will ensure proper and transparent determination of impacts of all public and non-public agriculture investments.
- i) Reviewing of existing policies and legislative frameworks or formulate new ones to effectively promote and regulate agriculture investments in different sub-sectors.

## 4.2 Institutional Coordination

The Malawi Government recognizes the importance of stakeholder's participation in policy direction. These include the cooperating partners, particularly DCAFS (i.e. World Bank, Norwegian Government, African Development Bank, USAID, DFID, Irish Aid, JICA, FAO, Flemish Government, African Union, SADC, COMESA and other bilateral donors such as China and India). This policy seeks to develop strong institutional linkages between the Ministry and various institutions and stakeholders especially on the following issues:

- **Green belt Initiative (GBI):** Since the Malawi Government has put great emphasis on irrigation farming to stimulate economic growth, the policy envisages close collaboration between Ministries of Agriculture and Food Security, Irrigation and Water Development, Transport and Public Works, Development Planning and Corporation, Industry and Trade, Local Government and Rural Development, and Energy and Mining, amongst others. Due to the multi-sectoral nature of the initiative, the overall coordination and leadership of the initiative lies in the Office of President and Cabinet (OPC).
- **Decentralization:** In line with the provisions of the National Decentralization Act and Policy, the policy envisages continued decentralization of decision making in the agricultural sector from central level to the district assemblies. The central decision

making will focus on policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation. The Agriculture Development Divisions (ADDs) of the Ministry are part of the central level decision making machinery. In addition, efforts will be made to strengthen the capacity of the grass root levels institutions in the districts such as the District Agriculture Coordination Committee (DAECC), District Stakeholder Panel (DSP), District Agriculture Committee (DAC), Area Stakeholder Panel (ASP), amongst others, so that they effectively participate in decision making and implementation under the District Agriculture Development Offices (DADO).

- **Research- Extension – Farmer Linkages.** This policy seeks to strength the existing research-extension-farmer linkages. The linkages here refer to public research vis-à-vis public extension and farmers.
- **Sector Investments** The policy envisages the Malawi Government taking full ownership and leadership over all public investment decisions in the sector. This implies that while key stakeholders such as development partners, private sector and civil society will always be engaged to provide input into the decision making processes in all such undertakings, Government will take lead and ensure that all decisions made are in the best interest of the Malawi nation. In addition, all investments in the sector should be harmonized, coordinated and realigned to the national and sector development objectives.
- **Development and sustenance of partnerships.** The policy envisages the development and sustenance of public-private, public-public and private-private partnerships in all areas of service delivery in the sector. These will be encouraged to ensure efficiency and cost effectiveness in the delivery of services in the sector.