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**Status of Policy Implementation for
Enhancing Community Resilience in
Malawi**



Disclaimer

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What is Community Resilience?

Community resilience is capacity of communities to cope with and bounce back from shocks and stresses. This means that resilient communities do not just survive, they thrive. They do well during good and bad times. Resilience is a cross cutting issue requiring effective collaboration and coordinated package of interventions.

Policies related to Community Resilience

Government of Malawi has made various policy statements towards enhancing resilience in a number of existing sectoral policy instruments. These policy statements provide a starting point in developing measures necessary for building and enhancing people's resilience. Current policies related to community resilience include those in the sectors of environment; food security; livestock; water; economic development; adaptation; and agriculture. In addition, the country has also embarked on development of two key policies related to enhancing resilience: National Disaster Risk Management Policy and National Climate Change Policy. Effective disaster risk and climate change management are key to community resilience.

Progress in Policy Implementation

Policy implementation for enhancing community resilience refers to mechanisms, resources and relationships that link community resilience related policies to programme action. It must be noted that policies once adopted are not always implemented as envisioned and do not necessarily achieve intended results.

Policy Formulation and Dissemination

Over the past two decades there have been significant policy changes relevant to community resilience. Policies have been revised and improved that directly ensure enhancement of community resilience.

For example the following policies have been revised or formulated: National Environmental Policy as revised in 2004; Food Security Policy 2006; Policy Document on Livestock 2004; National Water Policy as revised in 2005; National Irrigation Policy and Development Strategy 2000; National Land Resources Management Policy and Strategy 2000; Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II covering 2011 to 2016; National Adaptation Programme of Action 2006; and Agriculture Sector Wide Approach 2010.

Though the process of policy reform must remain dynamic, and a lot remains to be done, at the moment the policy instruments define the path for making the transition into resilient communities. This includes spelling out a number of policy objectives, measures and interventions for effecting this transition.

Across the sectors there have been and are on-going efforts to communicate policies, legislation and information to stakeholders, however, most of these policies are still not well understood at the community level.

In spite of the progress made in policy reform, the process of finalizing the National Disaster Risk Management Policy and National Agricultural Policy has almost stalled. These policy instruments are very important for enhancing community resilience, mainly considering that Malawi predominantly rain-fed agro based is suffering from the effects of climate change. Moreover, a disaster risk management policy framework would enable communities anticipate, prepare for and respond to climate-related disasters and risks. Most stakeholders are worried as to how communities will build their resilience against increasing frequency of effects of climate change without relevant national policy framework.

Leadership in Policy Implementation

Though Malawi has made significant progress in putting in place coordination mechanisms related to climate change and disaster response, such as Technical Committee on Climate Change and National Disaster Preparedness and Relief Committee, given the sectoral approach to policy implementation in the country, it has been difficult for strong leadership and commitment to emerge that resilience requires.

its objectives to date; and

- *No dedicated system for resource allocation* - although experience suggests that effects of climate change and disasters could affect sustainable development, there is still no dedicated system for allocation of resources for climate change and disaster risk management. Most of the climate change and disaster risk management interventions are still being supported by development partners.

What is your take to improve policy implementation

- All organizations aiming at enhancing community resilience require effective collaboration to ensure that they are delivering a coordinated package of interventions;
- Lobby Government of Malawi to finalize all incomplete policies and legislation that have a bearing on enhancing resilience;
- Continue engaging government on the need to increase allocation towards climate change and disaster risk management;
- Civil society should support government in implementation of policies especially building the capacity of communities to monitor implementation of the policies; and
- Policy dialogue needs to be initiated at local and national level on holistic and integrated approaches towards resilience building.

Monitoring Policy Implementation

Most of the policy implementation is primarily taking place through projects. However, the impact of the majority of the projects is insignificant, primarily because the number of projects is relatively small compared to the need and magnitude of the scope required to enhance community resilience. Moreover many of these projects are externally funded. In addition, many community resilience related policies do not have policy impact monitoring frameworks that could focus on identifying indicators, sources of data, baselines, desired targets and milestones.

Although no comprehensive policy implementation monitoring mechanism exists at national level, there is sufficient evidence suggesting that implementation of policies supportive of enhancing community resilience has been challenging and slow. In fact in some of the sectors it has hardly begun.

Weaknesses Limiting Policy Implementation

Policy implementation to enhance community resilience has been severely limited by several factors. These include:

- *Incomplete policy formulation and legislation* - key policies instruments affected include National Climate Change Policy; National Disaster Risk Management Policy; National Agricultural Policy; and Draft revised Environment Management Bill.
- *Stalled policy implementation* – the process of implementation of some of the policies has stalled for several reasons: there are capacity constraints to implement the policy instruments (technical qualitative and quantitative capacity) constraints, particularly in the disaster management sector.
- *Resistance to a new system* – there is still (though perhaps declining) resistance and practical difficulties in making the transition from the usual approach of disaster relief and response to working in disaster risk management. With the approved National Disaster Risk Reduction in place since 2010, progress should have been made in implementing some

Moreover leadership focus of the latter has been on relief and response which is only a minor component of resilience building.

Also without comprehensive climate change and disaster risk management policies, there has been no coordinated policy guidance, incoherence and ineffective implementation of interventions due to limited cross-sectoral coordination and sector-by-sector or project-by-project policy interpretation and implementation. The consequence has been conflicts in institutional mandates and responsibilities and confusion in coordination and leadership, particularly on climate change management issues. Moreover, although disaster management has been under the Office of the President and Cabinet, and has ostensibly the necessary political clout to effectively coordinate sector agencies, this has not necessarily been the case on the ground as coordination has often been compromised by capacity issues, both human and financial.

However, leadership in policy implementation may now be resolved by the recent development of a National Climate Change Policy and a National Disaster Risk Management Policy and creation of the new ministry responsible for climate change management.

Stakeholder involvement in Policy Implementation

While policy formulation has increasingly been a multi-sectoral endeavor, involving government, nongovernmental organizations and development partners, this engagement has not been sustained during the policy implementation stage of most of the community resilience related policies.

Efforts to move ahead with stakeholder involvement in policy implementation are being made, but with wide spread admission that to date the extent of stakeholder involvement is extremely varied. While there has been significant increase in number of nongovernmental organizations and donor funded programmes within government, during implementation there is still little coordination of activities and approaches among and between them and the government and nongovernmental organizations.

In a number of instances there has been duplication of efforts as large

climate change adaptation programmes have been implemented in some communities. This has tended to constrain sharing of information, coordination of the use financial resources and exchange of experiences and lessons. This further limits the potential of attaining community resilience and slows down the process of developing the best community resilience models for Malawi. Moreover, the ineffective stakeholder collaboration in implementation affects the demand for coordinated package of interventions that resilience being a cross cutting issue requires.

Implementation Planning and Resource Mobilization

A number of community resilience policies do not have implementation plans, as previous policy formats did not require this. Many of those formulated between 1990 and 2004 such as National Environmental Policy as revised in 2004; Food Security Policy 2006; Policy Document on Livestock 2004; National Water Policy as revised in 2005; National Irrigation Policy and Development Strategy 2000; National Land Resources Management Policy and Strategy 2000 do not have associated planning frameworks in the form of logical or results frameworks that identify linked policy goals, policy objectives, policy priority areas, strategies, responsible institutions and time frames. So far most of the sectors have operated from policies and legislation rather than strategies and action plans.

Inadequate financial capacity in the sectors related to community resilience limits policy implementation. This means that most government departments are hardly initiating projects to implement policy measures from national budgetary allocations. Over the years trends in resource allocations to sectors related to enhancing community resilience have been sending mixed signals. For instance the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Management that is the key coordination institution of climate change management in Malawi whose proportion of budget allocation includes Department of Climate Change and Meteorological Services, Department of Forestry and Environmental Affairs Department had a combine proportion of 68% of the Ministry's budget in the 2012/13 fiscal year which has declined to 48% in the 2013/14 Ministry's budget. However, in comparison to the national budget, the proportion was 0.69%

the 2012/13 fiscal year approved budget and has increased to 1.2% in the 2013/14 fiscal year. This is largely due to re-organization of the departments in the Ministry as well as increase in Personal Emoluments in the budget.

Furthermore, the Department of Disaster Management Affairs that is under the Office of President and Cabinet (OPC) Vote, had a proportion of 2.65% in the 2012/13 OPC budget and has a proportion of 1.26% in the OPC vote in the 2013/14 budget. With respect to national budget, the sub sector was 0.03% of the national budget while it has declined to 0.01% of 2013/14 national budget. The disaster management allocation in the current fiscal year represents 28% decrease from the previous year's allocation. The status of resources means the department can hardly initiate disaster risk management activities that are critical to enhancing community resilience.

In addition, by being incorporated in the OPC Vote under Unforeseen Circumstances means that the department will continue to have difficulties to rapidly respond when disasters occur as access to the requisite financial resources remains indirect and unpredictable.



Families affected by floods such as these feel the pinch of delayed response due to centralized arrangement in financial resources for disaster management