POLICY BRIEF

Vol 1 Issue 2

Land Resources Management Policy and Strategy

Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy

UTVIKLINGSFONDET
Acknowledgement and Disclaimer
This Policy Brief has been produced with the financial assistance of the Development Fund of Norway, through the Sustainable Agriculture and the Lead Farmer Programme. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy (CEPA) and can under no circumstance be regarded as reflecting the position of the Development Fund of Norway.

Background
Malawi adopted the National Land Resources Management Policy and Strategy in 2000. Its overall goal is promoting efficient, diversified and sustainable use of land based resources for both agriculture and other uses so as to avoid sectoral land-use conflicts and ensure socio-economic development.

Agriculture remains the largest land use in Malawi and it affects and is affected by other land uses. On the other hand, high population growth has led to inter-generational subdivision of land and reduction in the land holding size per capita. The policy recognizes the need for policy guidelines on the conservation and management of land resources as their depletion or degradation may affect food security and sustainable socio-economic growth.

Expected Outcomes
The national land resources management policy and strategy is developed to assist in:
• Balancing requirements for different land uses and regulating the competing demand for land by different sectors;
• Designating the best use of land for optimal socio-economic development;
• Providing guidelines and strategies for the sustainable utilization of the land resource base;
• Defining roles of different players in land resources management issues, guide the formulation and review of sectoral policies and legislation related to land use and its management; and
• Enabling the country to determine the priority application of both internal and externally provided resources.

The policy also serves as an instrument for conservation of land for agriculture and indicates land use and management measures that will help balance and regulate the competing land use for different activities such as forestry and human settlements.

Policy Goal
The policy goal is to promote efficient, diversified and sustainable use of land based resources both for agriculture and other uses in order to avoid sectoral land use conflicts and ensure sustainable socio-economic development.

Strategies
The policy outlines 16 specific objectives in different areas of interest together with strategies that will be able to help achieve the objective under each area of interest.
Among others the policy presents the following objectives and strategies:

i. Land Productivity
The policy's objective is to improve and sustain productivity of land for agriculture and other alternative land uses. In order to achieve this, the government of Malawi intends to promote appropriate soil and water conservation practices; provide information for proper land use planning and management; develop methods for participatory approach in conservation farming, evaluate area specific recommendations on soil management, provide guidelines on stocking rates and productions and disseminate appropriate building technologies.

ii. Land Rehabilitation
The objective of the policy is to ensure that degraded land is rehabilitated for agriculture and other purposes. To achieve this, government will map of degraded areas to identify priority areas, provide guidelines for rehabilitation and regeneration of vegetation will be promoted in degraded areas; encourage local communities to form conservation committees to rehabilitate degraded areas with government offering technical assistance to the communities. In addition collaboration with other stakeholders in rehabilitation, provision of incentives for successful rehabilitation and conservation, voluntary resettlement of people and farming on unsuitable land.

iii. Public Awareness in Land Management
Public awareness is intended to instill a sense of responsibility and commitment towards management of land resources in the public. To achieve this, the government intends to do the following:

- Publicising land resources management policy and its implication on the community through regular awareness campaigns on sound land resources management practices;
- Strengthening and enhancing land conservation modules and curricula as well as reviewing training approaches in schools, colleges and relevant institutions;
- Involvement of all stakeholders in public awareness campaignsand
- Formulation of programmes on impacts of population growth.

iv. Surface Run-Off
The objective of the policy is to control surface runoff water for agriculture and other land uses through promotion of technologies that well minimize run-off, water harvesting and soil management technologies, catchment conservation, and campaigns against bushfires.

v. Community Initiatives in Land Resources Management
The policy aims to provide an enabling environment for community initiatives in managing their land resources. The strategies for achieving this include:

- Development of appropriate extension methods
- Formation of community farming groups
- Develop land use and management training manuals; and
- Formulation of contractual agreements between communities and the Department on conservation activities.

vi. Technology Development in Land Management
The objective of the policy is to develop technologies that are economically viable, ecologically sound and socio-culturally acceptable through promoting demand driven and holistic research in land management; encouraging participatory technology development; and on farm testing of proven research and carrying out demonstration for farmer training and appreciation.

vii. Institutional Coordination
The policy's objective is to enhance coordination among institutions involved in land resources management. This will be achieved through:

- Development of strong institutional linkages
- Provision of technical support to other institutions in resource conservation
- Ensure consistency in related policies
- Decentralization of land use planning and management
- Creation of a statutory National Land Use and Management Board to advise government on land issues
- Provision of contractual services on land resources conservation activities
- Strengthening function on relevant committees and bodies.

viii. Institutional capacity building
The policy's objective is to strengthen the capacity of the institutions to effectively plan, implement, monitor and evaluate land resources management through:

- Provision of training to staff involved in land management and provision for conducive work environment.
- Provision of materials and equipment for effective and efficient functioning of the department.
- Empowerment of rural communities to effectively manage their land resources
- Develop the human resources required for the implementation of the policy and optimum utilization of managerial, technical and scientific talent.

ix. Environmentally fragile areas
The objective of the policy is to protect and preserve environmentally fragile areas by identifying and mapping fragile areas; providing appropriate guidelines on their use and management; publicising ecological functions of these areas; and proposing the areas for gazetting as protected areas.

x. Legislation
The policy aims to provide a legal framework to support land resources conservation and management policies for rational and informed management of land resources. The strategies to attain this include:

- Formulation of a legal framework for the implementation of the land resources conservation policy
- Encourage maximum community participation in formulating, reviewing and
Developing and implementing forest management measures
• Including natural resources conservation in sectoral policies
• Promoting fisheries resources through control of pollution of lakes and rivers

xiv. Role of Non-Governmental Organizations and Local Communities
The overall objective is to complement government efforts in promoting sustainable land use and management practices by:
• Training local communities in sustainable land use and management practices
• Disseminating information to communities and help source funds for community initiatives on sustainable methods of land utilization.
• Identifying mechanisms to enable local communities to prepare and submit self-help programmers for improvement of land use and management systems
• Identifying, analyzing and incorporating positive traditional knowledge in land use and management systems
• Promoting off-farm employment opportunities to reduce pressure on land

xv. Women and Gender
The objective of the policy is to integrate gender issues in policy and decision making on land to ensure shared responsibility over sustainable use and management of land resources. To this end, the policy provides for utilization of positive indigenous knowledge of women in sustainable land use and management; development and implementation of policies that recognize and enshrine the legal rights of women to land on an equitable basis; and promoting women perspectives in land use and management.