

## TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

Malawi is a unitary country with a presidential democratic political system and a single-tier subnational government structure. It has 35 councils: 7 urban and 28 rural districts.<sup>1</sup>



Unless otherwise indicated, all the information in this profile is taken from the previously published Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs).<sup>2</sup>

## 1. NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR SDG IMPLEMENTATION

In 2021 the country launched its new vision, the **Malawi 2063 (MW2063)**, which aims to achieve an upper-middle income status by 2063. It is operationalized through ten-year Implementation Plans. In its first **Implementation Plan (MIP-1)** the country has put in place clear strategies to fast-track the implementation of the SDGs to ensure it meets most of the goals by 2030.

### 1.1 NATIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS

In collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, the **National Planning Commission (NPC)** coordinates the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national level. **Pillar and Enable Coordination Groups (PECGs)** were established to ensure that the planning and implementation of the SDGs reflect their interlinkages and complementarity nature. PECGs are chaired by ministries, departments and agencies and also comprise councils, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academia, and development partners.

### 1.2 VNR ELABORATION PROCESS

Two coordination and governance structures were established to oversee the 2020 and 2022 VNR processes: the **National Steering Committee (NSC)** and the **Core Technical Committee (CTC)**. According to the 2022 VNR, the NSC consisted of key ministries, departments and agencies, UN agencies, development partners, the private sector, academia, religious groups and civil society organizations, and was responsible for policy oversight to ensure adherence to the general guidelines. The CTC, which was co-chaired by the NPC and the Department of Economic Planning and Development provided operational and logistical support. Both VNR processes were also carried out by **Working Groups**. According to the 2022 VNR, Thematic Working Groups were formed to lead specific processes covering interest constituencies of the population including youth, women, children, people with disability and civil society organizations.

### 1.3 MONITORING

The **National Statistics Office (NSO)** implemented measures to ensure that comprehensive and disaggregated data and information collection is continuously taking place at national and subnational levels. At the national level, the SDGs are monitored through **National SDGs Reports**. A high level of alignment of MIP-1 with the SDGs enables Malawi to streamline reporting needs of SDGs and MIP-1. Therefore, the MIP-1 Annual Progress Reviews, led by the PECGs with support from development partners and the NPC, are the main vehicles through which SDGs are reviewed annually. The glaring gaps in the monitoring and data systems continue to bring challenges in assessing national performance including the SDG implementation progress. Each year, the NPC organizes **National Development Conferences** which bring together different stakeholders to review progress in the implementation of the development plans in a transparent and inclusive way.

1. UCLG Africa, Cities Alliance, 2021, "Assessing the Institutional Environment of Cities and Subnational Governments in Africa", [https://www.citiesalliance.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/CitiesAlliance\\_Assessing%20Inst.%20Environment%20of%20Cities%20and%20Subnal.%20Govs%20in%20Africa\\_EN.pdf](https://www.citiesalliance.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/CitiesAlliance_Assessing%20Inst.%20Environment%20of%20Cities%20and%20Subnal.%20Govs%20in%20Africa_EN.pdf)

2. See: <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2021/26317MalawiVNRReport.pdf> (2020); <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2022/Malawi%202022%20Voluntary%20National%20Review%20%28VNR%29%20Report.pdf> (2022)

## 2. LRGs INVOLVEMENT IN SDG LOCALIZATION

The SDGs are mainstreamed into most **District Development Plans (DDP)** and **Village Action Plans**. The renewal of many recently expired DDP represents an opportunity for local councils to ensure their alignment with national development plans and the SDGs, as well as with the country's 2063 Agenda. Local structures carry out initiatives to implement the SDGs, however the focus is on goals that directly speak to their needs. According to the 2020 VNR, for purposes of inclusion at the local level, **Area and Village Development Committees (ADCs and VDCs)** bring the needs of the community and citizens to the District Councils to feed into their plans and sometimes participate in the monitoring of the projects undertaken in their areas. The SDGs were also translated into local languages to ensure the understanding of the SDGs and copies were distributed to the local councils and the ADCs and VDCs. The Malawi Local Government Association did not participate in the 2020 VNR process and there is no evidence of any LRG involvement in the 2022 VNR either.

### 2.1 LRGs PARTICIPATION

#### ► In the VNR process



Comments: The Malawi Local Government Association did not participate in the reporting processes.

#### ► In national coordination mechanisms for SDG implementation



Comments: The Malawi Local Government Association participates through ad-hoc consultations in the National Planning Commission (GTF Survey 2020).

This assessment is based on the information collected in the VNRs and in the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments' annual survey on the localization of the SDGs.

### 2.2 VNR REFERENCES

Districts are mentioned a few times in the 2020 and 2022 VNRs, without many specific examples of locally-led initiatives for SDG implementation.<sup>3</sup> However, the 2022 VNR notes in its conclusion that "a lot of local-driven initiatives on the SDGs were noted during the review, coupled with government-led interventions" (see VNR, 2022, p. 72).

### 2.3 SPECIFIC PROJECTS AND CASES

No reference.

### 2.4 VOLUNTARY SUBNATIONAL AND/OR LOCAL REVIEWS (VSRs / VLRs)

Not applicable.

### 2.5 MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

The 2022 VNR stresses that SDG implementation requires multi-stakeholder participation and sufficient financing of interventions at both national and subnational levels. The **Joint SDG Fund** was created which seeks to strengthen Malawi's financing architecture to accelerate SDG implementation. The programme is using two streams of intervention, the top-down establishment of Malawi's Integrated National Financing Framework and the bottom-up strengthening of the public finance management at the local level. All sectors, ministries, departments, and agencies of government align their programmes budgets to the MIP-1 and SDGs.

3. There is a subsection on "Localizing the SDGs" in the 2020 VNR which refers to a national strategy, the Integrated Rural Development Strategy. See VNR, 2020, p. 30.

## 3. RELEVANT INFORMATION

**General comments:** Since Malawi is suffering the impacts of disasters from climate change and other natural causes, there are various frameworks regarding disasters: the National Disaster Policy, the National Resilience strategy and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015- 2030 at the national and district levels. The government developed disaster management plans for its three major cities (**Lilongwe, Mzuzu and Zomba**) to guide the city councils on how to respond to disasters and mitigate their impacts. Though Malawi has made strides in enacting legislation and policies on climate change, the same is yet to be localized and local governments remain excluded from national programmes and projects on climate change, as programmes and projects on the same are centralized where local governments remain recipients and often spectators and not actors on the fight against climate change.<sup>4</sup>

Marginalized groups are incorporated into the key decision-making processes and are given leadership roles. For instance, various marginalized and “vulnerable” groups are represented in the VDCs, ADCs, and District Executive Committees (DECs) which are key structures for development planning and implementation at the sub-national level.

### 3.1 WOMEN PARTICIPATION

There is a persistent low level of women’s representation at the local level in Malawi. However, there is a ray of hope for improvement with the enactment of the Gender Equality Act, which calls for a minimum of 40% of either gender representation in decision-making positions.<sup>5</sup> Female representation in local government assemblies is currently at 14%, from 11% in 2014.

### 3.2 COVID 19

Malawi has developed a COVID-19 Socio-Economic Recovery Plan to counter the effects of the pandemic. It provides remedial strategic interventions to build back better in the economic recovery and set Malawi back on course in its efforts to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

## 4. SDG INDICATORS<sup>6</sup>

5.5.1. (b) Proportion of seats held by women (%) in local governments		14.6 (2019)
6.1.1. Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services (%)	Urban	-
	Rural	-
6.2.1. (a) Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services (%)	Urban	27 (2020)
	Rural	24 (2020)
11.1.1. Proportion of population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing (%)		65.1 (2018)
11.6.1. Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed (%)		-
11.6.2. Air pollution – annual means of particulate matter in cities (population weighted)		25.6 (2016)
11.b.2. Proportion of local governments that have adopted local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national strategies (%)		65 (2020)

4. UCLG Africa, Cities Alliance, 2021, “Assessing the Institutional Environment of Cities and Subnational Governments in Africa”, [https://www.citiesalliance.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/CitiesAlliance\\_Assessing%20Inst.%20Environment%20of%20Cities%20and%20Subnal.%20Govs%20in%20Africa\\_EN.pdf](https://www.citiesalliance.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/CitiesAlliance_Assessing%20Inst.%20Environment%20of%20Cities%20and%20Subnal.%20Govs%20in%20Africa_EN.pdf)

5. UCLG Africa, Cities Alliance, 2021, “Assessing the Institutional Environment of Cities and Subnational Governments in Africa”, [https://www.citiesalliance.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/CitiesAlliance\\_Assessing%20Inst.%20Environment%20of%20Cities%20and%20Subnal.%20Govs%20in%20Africa\\_EN.pdf](https://www.citiesalliance.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/CitiesAlliance_Assessing%20Inst.%20Environment%20of%20Cities%20and%20Subnal.%20Govs%20in%20Africa_EN.pdf)

6. The data used for this table come from the UN SDG Indicators Database. See: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal>