

# Newsletter

Dear Readers,

In this issue, we are delighted to share the highlights of our impactful work and engagements in Malawi. From the 2024 Malawi Agricultural Productivity and Commercialization Conference (MAPCC) to the significant collaborative interventions with our partners. Also, sharing our Forest Plantation Fee Structure Report with the Vice President of the Republic of Malawi showcases MwAPATA's commitment to fostering policy dialogue and collaboration with the government. Other dissemination events in the quarter include the side event at the African Food Systems Summit on the Role of Women and Youth in Agri-food Systems Transformation demonstrating the Institute's dedication to evidence-based research and informed decision-making. We are also excited to present various research outcomes on key issues that are vital to the national conversation on agriculture policy. This issue also highlights our activities under the Transformative Initiatives (TI) for Food Systems project and the successful 13th Eminent Speaker Series event we conducted this quarter. Stay captivated!



Mr. William Chadza - Executive Director

**IN THIS ISSUE**

Policy Engagement and Outreach (Page 1) Policy Research (Page 4) Partnerships and Corporation (Page 6)

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**POLICY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH**

## 2024 MAPCC CEMENTS THE AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION AGENDA

The Ministry of Agriculture, in partnership with the MwAPATA Institute, the National Planning Commission (NPC), and other partners organized the 2024 Malawi Agricultural Productivity and Commercialization Conference (MAPCC) at the Bingu International Convention Centre (BICC) in Lilongwe from 11th to 12th September 2024. This annual conference, initiated by President Dr. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera in 2021, **(To page 2)**

# Policy Support Pledged at MAPCC

(From page 1) ... plays a crucial role in promoting the first pillar of Malawi's long-term vision, MW2063, centered on increasing agricultural productivity and commercialization. This year's conference themed "Transforming Agri-food Systems to Generate Worth for All" was graced by the Minister of Agriculture Hon. Sam Dalitso Kawale MP.

In his remarks the Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Sam Dalitso Kawale highlighted the necessity for collaboration among stakeholders to overcome challenges and drive transformative change in food systems.

Hon. Sam Kawale further asked stakeholders in the key agri-food systems to collaborate and network strategically in leveraging their inputs during the conference to achieve the Malawi 2063 goals.

"As we move forward, collaboration will be vital because transforming the agri-food systems will not rely on one person or a single institution. As a

Ministry, we will work tirelessly to develop a policy framework enabling all relevant stakeholders to work effectively," Hon. Kawale concluded.

The 2024 MAPCC offered a unique opportunity for stakeholders to engage meaningfully and explore collectively in identifying ways of attaining agri-food systems transformation in the face of the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events in Malawi.

Over 400 participants attended the conference including representatives from government ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs), scientists, farmers, experts, farmers' organizations, the donor community, civil society, private companies, non-governmental organizations, academia, research institutions, and the media. 27% of the participants were from the private sector, 26% from the NGOs, 25% from the MDAs, 15% from the academia and research institutions, and 7% from the donor institutions.



The Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Sam Kawale speaking during the 2024 MAPCC

## Forest Plantation Fees Structure Report Launched

On 10th September 2024, the Vice President of the Republic of Malawi, Right. Honorable Dr. Michael Usi launched the Forest Plantation Fees Structure Report from the research that was conducted by the MwAPATA Institute in partnership with the Modern Cooking for Health Forests (MCHF) project funded by USAID and UKAid. The launch took place at the Forest Plantations Conference held at Ufulu Gardens in Lilongwe.

In this event, the presentation of research findings and discussions took center stage, focusing on exploring opportunities and practical solutions to the challenges hindering investment in Malawi's forest plantations. Additionally, the gathering fostered dialogue between public and private stakeholders, enhancing mutual understanding of each other's challenges and opportunities, while also aiming to identify effective strategies to strengthen the growth of Malawi's plantation forests.

During the presentation of the report, Dr. Maggie Munthali, a Research Fellow at the MwAPATA Institute, highlighted that Malawi's forest plantation fees are lower than those in the surrounding region. In his remarks during the conference, the Vice President called on stakeholders within the forest plantation industry to quickly report any corrupt individuals who are hindering the sector's progress in Malawi.



Vice President Dr. Michael Usi (left) launching the Forest Plantation Fees Structure Report, and MwAPATA Research Fellow Dr. Maggie Munthali (right) during her presentation.

# MwAPATA Institute Disseminates Pro-Youth Agriculture Policy Research Outcomes



*Dr. Maggie Munthali making her presentation during the AAYS regional dialogue*

Dr Maggie Munthali, a Research Fellow at MwAPATA Institute, interacted with the youths on 3rd August 2024 at the Bingu International Convention Centre (BICC) in Lilongwe during the Regional Dialogue on African Agribusiness Youth Strategy (AAYS) organized by African Youth Union Commission, AGRA-Sustainably Growing Africa's Food Systems, and SADC. In her presentation Dr. Munthali shared the institute's findings on "Youth Engagement in Agriculture and Food Systems in Malawi: Extent, Challenges and Opportunities". She encouraged young attendees to pursue commercial opportunities in the agricultural sector.

Later, on 5th August 2024, the MwAPATA Institute held a Media Briefing at its offices in Area 10, in

collaboration with the National Youth Council of Malawi (NYCOM). During the briefing Dr. Munthali highlighted the findings and policy recommendations from a Policy Brief titled "Prospects and Barriers to Youth Engagement in Agriculture and Agri-food Systems." Echoing Dr. Munthali's insights, NYCOM Executive Director Mr. Rex Chapota stated that the study's insights are crucial for identifying stakeholders who can help promote agriculture among youth. "We are currently drafting our strategic plan and these findings will inform some of our pathways to bringing back the youths in agriculture", said Chapota.

Additionally, Dr. Munthali served as a speaker at the side event on "Leveraging Youth Innovations for Sustainable Agri-Food Systems and Healthy Diets in Africa" during the 2024 Africa Food Systems Forum (AFSF), held at the Youth Dome in the Kigali Convention Center (KCC) in Rwanda on Monday, 2nd September 2024. She was joined by two Technical Support Team Members from Michigan State University, Dr. Milu Muyanga and Dr. William Burke, representing the MwAPATA Institute. Furthermore, on 12th September 2024, Dr. Munthali presented on "The Role of Women and Youth in Agri-food Systems Transformation" at the 2024 MAPCC at BICC in Lilongwe.

## MwAPATA Study Recommends Soil Fertility Management Interventions to the Affordable Input Program



*Dr. Nyondo during his PEP study presentation in India*

In partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and the University of Malawi, MwAPATA Institute conducted a study funded by the Partnership for Economic Policy (PEP) to assess the impact of integrating Soil Fertility Management Interventions (SFMI) in the Affordable Input Program (AIP). The study's findings were presented by MwAPATA Institute's Research Fellow Dr. Christone Nyondo at the 32<sup>nd</sup> International Conference of Agricultural Economists held in New Delhi, India, from August 2-7, 2024.

According to the study, despite Malawi's implementation of the Farm Input Subsidy Program (FISP) since the 2004/2005 season, maize productivity remains below potential due to poor soil health. The study demonstrated that adding organic fertilizers and agricultural lime to the Affordable Input Program (AIP) inputs improves maize yields.

## Research Outcomes Published (July – September 2024)

### Drivers of Agricultural Growth in Malawi (Working paper)

This study identifies the drivers and constraints of agricultural growth in Malawi. The results show that input intensification, improvements in irrigation, and land expansion are the key drivers of Malawi's recent growth in agricultural production. The study highlights the urgent need to address the challenges constraining agricultural production and productivity in Malawi.

**READ MORE [HERE](#)**

### A Comparative Assessment of Plantation Fees, Prices and Options Analysis to Improve Revenue Generation in Malawi (Working paper)

The study aims to compare Malawi's forest plantation fees and prices with those in Sub-Saharan Africa to establish a competitive plantation fee structure for Malawi's forestry sector that supports sustainable management of plantation forests and enhances revenue generation for the Government of Malawi.

**READ MORE [HERE](#)**

### Malawi's Poultry Value Chain Can Unlock Widespread Economic Benefits with Appropriate Policies and Investments (Policy Brief)

This policy brief explores how Malawi's poultry value chain can drive economic growth, focusing on the impact of high feed costs and proposed reforms. By addressing feed prices, expanding maize production, and improving export processes, Malawi could boost poultry production, enhance food security, and add \$31.5 million to GDP by 2030.

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### The Status of Fertiliser and Soil Health Policies and Regulations in Malawi

(Policy Brief)

Malawi's agricultural sector faces significant challenges due to low crop productivity driven by limited access to improved seeds and fertilisers and poor soil health. This policy brief assesses the status of Malawi's fertiliser and soil health policies, strategies, and legislative frameworks. Using the Agricultural Innovation Systems-Policy Practice Index (AIS-PPI), a comprehensive analysis of the Malawi fertiliser and soil health policy and legislative ecosystem was conducted, revealing strong policy formulation but weak implementation capacity due to financial and human capacity constraints and bureaucratic delays.

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### Prospects and Barriers to Youth Engagement in Agriculture and Food Systems in Malawi (Working Paper)

The agriculture and food systems sector in Malawi has the potential to create employment and income opportunities for underemployed and unemployed youths. The paper examines the barriers and opportunities for youth within the country's agricultural sector.

**READ MORE [HERE](#)**

### Policy Implications of Escalating Tropical Cyclone Threats to Malawi Amidst Rising Indian Ocean Temperatures (Working paper)

This study reveals a trend of stronger storms impacting Malawi, emphasizing the urgent need for disaster preparedness and resilience-building. It highlights policies and investments that can mitigate future impacts and promote sustainable development.

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### Policy options for unlocking the potential of Malawi's soybean value chain (Policy Brief)

This research explores growth opportunities, key challenges, and policy reforms for enhancing the competitiveness of Malawi's soybean value chain. The study demonstrates that, if implemented, the suggested policy reforms can improve economic growth, create jobs, and reduce poverty.

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### Policy Options for Revitalizing Banana Value Chain in Malawi

(Policy Brief)

The banana value chain was selected as one of three priority value chains to drive inclusive agriculture transformation in Malawi. The brief identifies policy and investment interventions that can complement the current government efforts, supported by donors and the private sector, to revitalize the banana value chain in Malawi.

**READ MORE [HERE](#)**

### What Promotes Gender Equity in Land Rental Markets? Evidence from Malawi (Working Paper)

Land rental markets play an important role in agricultural and structural transformation. Previous studies have shown that a gender gap exists in land rental market participation between women and men, but we show that the gap has reduced.

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### Optimizing Forest Revenue Generation in Malawi: A comparative analysis of forest plantation fees, prices, and Policy Options (Policy Brief)

The study aims to compare Malawi's forest plantation fees and prices with those in Sub-Saharan Africa to establish a competitive plantation fee structure for Malawi's forestry sector that supports sustainable management of plantation forests and enhances revenue generation for the Government of Malawi.

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**READ MORE [HERE](#)**

### Prospects and Barriers to Youth Engagement in Agriculture and Food Systems in Malawi (PB)

(Policy Brief)

The agriculture and food systems sector in Malawi has the potential to create employment and income opportunities for underemployed and unemployed youths. The paper examines the barriers and opportunities for youth within the country's agricultural sector. It also offers policy options and interventions to support and enhance youth engagement in agriculture and food systems.

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**“ Evidence Matters for Transformational Impact ”**

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# PPVC Training Equips MwAPATA Staff with Advanced Policy Analysis Skills



PPVC training participants, including Dr. Nyondo and Mrs. Minofu, at the final session in Pretoria, South Africa.

MwAPATA researchers Dr. Christone Nyondo and Mrs. Joyce Minofu have successfully concluded year-and-a-half training program focused on Policy and Investment Prioritization through Value Chain Analysis (PPVC II). The final session of this intensive training and capacity-building initiative took place in September 2024 at the Fire and Ice Protea hotel in Pretoria, South Africa.

This training program, which involved collaboration with researchers from across the continent, among other things, aimed at advancing growth in the Africa Network of Agricultural

Policy Research Institutes (ANAPRI) and strengthening the participants' contribution to research and outreach activities on the continent.

The PPVC fellows training equipped Mrs. Joyce Minofu with Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) Modelling skills, while Dr. Christone Nyondo was equipped with Partial Equilibrium Modelling tools.

According to Joyce Minofu, the PPVC training has equipped them with several advanced policy analysis tools for identifying value chains that would lead to inclusive agricultural transformation using composite market-led indicators.

"The PPVC training has raised my analytical skills in modeling the economy-wide impacts of various policy and investment options on GDP, poverty, employment, and diet quality," Joyce asserted.

"Through the PPVC training, I have also come to learn the importance of engaging public and private players for a buy-in of the policy analysis results", she added. According to her, she is now determined to apply the tools and skills she acquired during the training to enhance her current policy research analysis.

# MwAPATA Communications Team Joins the Public Relations Society of Malawi



MwAPATA Communications Officer Blessme Phiri (left) with fellow PRSM participants at the PR conference. Honourable Moses Kunkuyu, Minister of Information and Digitalization speaking during the PR conference.



As part of promoting continuous professional development and capacity building for its staff, the MwAPATA Institute supported its communications team to participate in the 2024 Public Relations Society of Malawi (PRSM) Annual Lakeshore Conference, which took place from October 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

The MwAPATA communications team (Mercy Phiri Mikanda - Policy Research Engagement Officer, and Blessme Phiri – Communications Officer) joined many other Public Relations (PR) and Communications officers in participating at the PR conference at Makokola in Mangochi where the Guest of Honour was Hon. Moses Kunkuyu, Minister of Information and Digitalization.

The PRSM conference, conducted under the theme "Managing Narratives for Enhanced Democracy and Development," provided a good platform for the communications team to interact with and learn from other professionals in the same field and extend the institute's PR-related networks.

Speaking during the conference, the Minister of Information urged the communications and PR personnel to communicate positively, not only for the good image of their organizations but also for Malawi.

# MwAPATA Institute Participates in the GIZ Food Systems Transformation Initiative (TI) Project Activities



Left photo – Dedza District Council participants during one of the exercises at the visioning workshop

MwAPATA Institute together with the Civil Society Organisation Nutrition Alliance (CSONA), Civil Society Agriculture Network (CISANET), and the Malawi Government, conducted participatory Food Systems Visioning and Planning workshops in Chikwawa, Dedza, and Mzimba districts as part of the Transformative Initiative (TI) which is funded by GIZ Malawi.

The visioning workshops conducted between July and September 2024 saw the TI team engaging key food systems stakeholders from the district and community levels including sector heads from agriculture, nutrition, health and security as well as traders in creating a shared five-year vision and plan for an improved local food system.

Led by the Director of Planning and Development (DPD), at the district

level and the Traditional Authorities (TAs) at the community level, the stakeholders in each district collectively created a vision for a transformed food system to be achieved by 2030. The TI team observed several common elements across the vision statements from the three districts, including improved inclusiveness, knowledge, skills, infrastructure, security services, and enhanced coordination and networking among service providers.

Representing MwAPATA in the visioning workshops were Dinah Salonga, Mercy Phiri Mikanda, and Blessme Phiri. The sessions were facilitated by Facilitators of Change Interventions (FOCI), contracted by GIZ Malawi.

## MwAPATA Accounts Personnel Attends the 2024 ICAM Conference



The 2024 ICAM conference at Sun 'n' Sand Holiday Resort in Mangochi

The MwAPATA Institute Finance and Administration Manager Ms. Mercy Chirwa as well as the Finance and Administration Officer Mr. Ernest Mfuné attended the 2024 Institute of Chartered Accountants in Malawi (ICAM) conference from 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> September 2024. The ICAM conference was held at Sun 'n' Sand Holiday Resort in Mangochi and the Guest of Honour was Hon. Simplex Chithyola Banda, MP, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs. The theme for the conference was "Navigating Economic

Uncertainties: Strategies for Growth and Resilience". Among other things, the participants at the conference discussed emotional intelligence skills to navigate tough and versatile work and business environments. They also discussed emerging international standards on business, decent work and development.

The MwAPATA finance team shall apply the best practices and lessons learnt from the conference on their day-to-day business in the Institute



## Evidence Matters for Transformational Impact



### VISION

Our vision to be a world-class, highly active, credible, and respected local **agricultural policy research think tank** in Malawi, the most sought-after in Africa, and among the most respected in the world.

### MISSION

Our mission is to conduct independent, objective, and empirical high-quality research aimed at **providing innovative and practical recommendations** to inform and improve agricultural sector policies in Malawi

### OUR CORE VALUES


Professionalism/Integrity


Relevance

Independence

Mutual respect

Excellence

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