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anlässlich der Veranstaltung

### **60 Jahre deutsch-malawische Beziehung**

am 27.09.2024, 16:00 Uhr – 21:00 Uhr  
ICD Academy for Cultural Diplomacy

Your Excellency, Ambassador Mpinganjira,  
Your Excellencies, Members of Parliament,  
Dear friends of Malawi,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to be with you today to celebrate 60 years of diplomatic relations between the Malawi and Germany.

“Zikomo pondiyitana ku mwambo ofunikilawu, ndipo ndine okondwa kwambiri kupezeka pa malo ano lero” [„Ich danke Ihnen sehr für die Einladung zu diesem besonderen Anlass und freue mich sehr, heute hier zu sein.“]

60 years of diplomatic relations between Germany and Malawi – this is a period that we look back on with pride and gratitude.

In Germany, the 60th wedding anniversary is called a “diamond wedding”, as marriage after 60 years together is considered particularly valuable and resilient – characteristics that also describe our bilateral relations.

They began in 1964 – immediately after Malawi’s independence. Today, Germany is one of the few EU member states that is represented by an embassy in Malawi, and has been there continuously since 1964.

The beginnings of our diplomatic relations in 1964 were shaped by the desire to support Malawi in its development as a young, independent state.

The files of the political archive at the Foreign Office contain numerous documents from the early days, including a report on the public relations work of the German embassy – which was then still in Blantyre – on the occasion of the celebrations for Malawi's Independence Day:

The headline read: "Germany Salutes Malawi!". The embassy acquired a full newspaper page in the "Times" and the "Malawi News", on which photos of Prime Minister Kamuzu Banda's visit to Berlin and Bonn were published under this headline in English and Chichewa.

Over the last 60 years, our relations have continuously developed, intensified and broadened.

Today, on a working level, we have a very regular and fruitful exchange with Ambassador Mpinganjira and his team at the Malawian Embassy here in Berlin. And I can confirm the same for the German Ambassador in Lilongwe, Ute König, and her team.

Many mutual visits reflect the close and trusting relations between our two countries and we have seen an intensification of our bilateral relations over the past two years.

A special highlight was the recent official visit by H.E. President Lazarus Chakwera to Germany in August, accompanied by a high-ranking delegation, and his meeting with Federal President Steinmeier. During his visit he also met with Parliamentary State Secretary Niels Annen from BMZ and representatives from the business community.

This first visit by a Malawian head of state since 2010 shows the depth of our current partnership.

Another highlight was in April last year when Hon Foreign Minister Honorable Nancy Tembo came to visit as the first Malawian Foreign Minister since 2011 and met with Federal Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock.

Many of you might remember her statements at the panel discussion organized by the German Africa Foundation and SAFRI, when Minister Tembo spoke about the repercussions of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine on food security for the African countries.

We were also very pleased that then Minister of Environment Hon Michael Usi (and new Vice-President since June) participated for the first time in the Petersberg Climate Dialogue and that in June of this year Hon Agnes Nyalonje, Minister of Labour, came to Berlin to talk about the exchange of skilled workers.

Later this year, Hon Khumbize Kandodo Chiponda, Minister of Health, will take part in the World Health Summit in Berlin

From the German side, Parliamentary State Secretary Dr. Bärbel Kofler from BMZ traveled to Malawi in February 2023 to underline Germany's support for Malawi's democratic reform course. And a delegation from BMZ will soon travel to Malawi for government consultations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Global challenges need be tackled jointly. This was also the strong message this week at the Summit of the Future in New York which was co-facilitated by Germany and Namibia.

Malawi is a strong partner in this endeavor with whom we share values such as democracy and the strong belief in the UN charter, including the respect of territorial integrity, and a commitment to multilateralism.

We appreciate Malawi's active engagement in international organizations and initiatives for the global enforcement of human rights and the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. As a member of the group of landlocked developing countries (LLDC), Malawi is also a reliable partner in international climate protection.

When Hon. Nancy Tembo was in Germany last year, she said "Nature is invading us". Climate change is not just a phrase for Malawi but felt strongly by the people in Malawi.

Therefore, strengthening resilience to climatic shocks is one of our priorities in the field of economic and development cooperation with Malawi.

Germany has been and continues to be a reliable partner at Malawi's side, supporting the country's efforts through extensive development cooperation through grants over the past 60 years.

Today's panel discussion will shed more light on Germany's development cooperation that focuses on combating poverty, strengthening resilience to climatic shocks, improving the health system and developing the private sector.

Still, we do not limit our support to funds, but try to assist also in practical terms, especially in difficult times which Malawi went through this summer.

We appreciate the trust that the Malawian government has shown when we offered to help in the investigation of the plane crash that led to the passing of His Honour Vice President Saulos Chilima and eight other Malawian citizens in June this year.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We cannot be here today to celebrate 60 years of bilateral cooperation without talking about those who are the heart of this relation.

You all here in this room and many more outside from civil society and the business community have been contributing over the last decades in various fields to make this relationship a vibrant and sustainable one. And I have had the privilege to meet some of you already.

I would only mention a few: The German-Malawian Society, founded in 2009 under the committed chairmanship of Ms Christiane Bertels-Heering, brings together initiatives from a wide range of non-profit organizations.

The twin town partnership between Blantyre and Hanover has been existing for 56 years and has led to personal exchanges and numerous collaborations between the two cities. And I heard that Ms. Silvia Hesse who has been working for this partnership for many years is currently in Malawi.

Already in 1964, the first German ambassador initiated in collaboration with the "Freundeskreis Zentral- und Ostafrika e.V." the training of ten young Malawian women as nurses in a hospital in Hanover. After three years of training, they took their exams in Germany and returned home to take over responsible positions in Malawi.

Ties between the two cities have remained strong: Today, Hanover promotes for example cultural exchange with Malawian artists and supports the Blantyre Arts Festival.

There is also a close cooperation in the media sector: The DW Academy has been working closely with MISA Malawi in the field of education for journalists and expert training since 2015.

German is taught as a second foreign language at PASCH-Schule Bambino Private Secondary School, and there is an annual student exchange with a partner school in Munich.

Scientific cooperation exists, for example, with the Senckenberg Natural History Museum in Frankfurt in the field of paleoanthropology or within the framework of the newly established Else Kröner tandem professorship at the universities of Bonn and Lilongwe in the field of global child health.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In her article in the yearbook of the German Africa Foundation last year, Minister Tembo wrote that the youth was probably the most important part of society to include in the formal and informal partnerships. We couldn't agree more.

Germany will continue to be a reliable partner and support Malawi in implementing its development strategy Vision Malawi 2063.

Sometimes this means taking new and unconventional roads – as President Chakwera showed when he swapped his state limousine for an e-bike at short notice to present a bicycle donation project in Offenbach in August 2024.

Let me conclude: Germany thanks Malawi - the "Warm heart of Africa" - for its long-standing, close and constantly growing partnership.

We appreciate the commitment of everyone involved in this relationship - from government representatives to the many volunteers.

„Herzlichen Glückwunsch zu 60 Jahren Unabhängigkeit, Malawi!“ –

“Takunyadilani a Malawi! Tipitilize kukhala pa ubwenzi wathu kwa zaka zambiri!” [„Herzlichen Glückwunsch Malawi und auf viele weitere Jahre unserer Freundschaft.“] Thank you. Zikomo.