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Foreword

Dear reader,
Dear friends of Malawi,

Another year is drawing to a close – where did the months and weeks of 2025 go? Our members, who work exclusively on a voluntary basis, have been working on their projects with great success in some cases! We won't dwell on the hard work, time and disappointments here!

The German Malawi Association held its 2025 general meeting and elected a new board (see article).

In the public part of the meeting, just a few days after the elections in Malawi, it evaluated the results. Completely unexpectedly, the first round of voting produced a clear winner: former President Prof. Peter Mutharika, predecessor of President Lazarus Chakwera, is the new president. A change that took place democratically and without violence. And now everyone is hoping for better times ahead!

We also presented several (new) projects. There is no shortage of ideas, and seeing and hearing what others are doing creates a great sense of togetherness. For the first time, we held a meeting with representatives of Malawian NGOs at the Malawian Embassy in Berlin the day before – meeting and working in person is still the best way to get to know each other! To be continued!

So, looking at these keywords about our activities, we have been quite busy! Thank you to everyone who contributed! And I am confident that we will produce another series of positive messages in 2026.



At this point, I would like to wish all friends of Malawi a wonderful Christmas season with their families and friends and a good start to a happy, contented and, above all, healthy 2026.

Kind regards,

Christiane Bertels-Heering

From Blantyre to Ansbach – a Malawian family between Mulanje and Middle Franconia

My name is James Phillip. Together with my wife Tiwalinde and our two children, Mirror and Michael, I moved from Blantyre to Ansbach. Our roots are in the Mulanje region, but our new home is now Middle Franconia. My wife and I are currently working as nursing assistants in a retirement home, and the complicated process of getting our nursing qualifications recognised is still ongoing. Our son Michael attends nursery school, and our daughter Mirror is in the first year of primary school. This is a big step for all of us, one that brings with it a lot of hope but also many questions.

What particularly impresses us about Germany is the education system. It prepares children for different paths in life at a very early age and encourages creative thinking. We can already see this in our own children, who are encouraged to ask questions, develop their own ideas and take responsibility. A good education opens doors, and we are grateful that our children have these opportunities here. Our six-year-old daughter already speaks German well after two months in first grade.

We also experience the security and stability in everyday life as something very new and valuable. Political and economic stability creates trust in the state and makes it easier to live without constant fear of crises. You can sense that many people assume that rules apply and institutions function. This contributes to peaceful coexistence.

Another point that strikes us is the well-developed infrastructure. Whether by train, bus or road, much of it is reliable and well organised. It is still new to us how many journeys are made by train or bus as a matter of course here.

As positive as many things are, the reality is that racism exists in Germany, as in many other countries. Personally, I have had very few overtly negative experiences so far. Nevertheless, I know how destructive racism can be. It divides people instead of bringing them together.

One experience that was particularly painful for me was when my daughter was bullied at school by other migrant children because of her skin colour. As a father, it affected me deeply to see how she no longer wanted to go to school and withdrew into herself. At first, I didn't know how best to help her and how to resolve the situation. The school is very supportive, but its options are limited.

We see our place here in Germany as permanent. Only here do our children have a good chance of getting a good education and being successful in life. We would be lost without mentors to help us navigate the local bureaucracy. However, we experience a great deal of support and assistance here; most people here are very friendly and welcoming.



MOYO – Ansbach für Malawi e.V.

An important anchor for us as a family is MOYO – Ansbach für Malawi e.V. The association was founded in 2014 as an aid project for the Mulanje region and has been working closely with local partners ever since. The aim is to improve the living conditions of the people in Mulanje in the long term through education, health and sustainability projects. Projects such as the 'Sustainable Livelihood Project' with the Mulanje Mission Hospital or initiatives for school meals, school desks and drinking water show what concrete support can look like on the ground.

MOYO works on a 100% voluntary basis, with all donations going directly to projects in Malawi. At the same time, the association also wants to raise awareness of the situation in Malawi in Ansbach, bring people together and show that both sides can learn from each other, the people of Mulanje as well as the people of Ansbach.

For my family, this connection between Mulanje and Ansbach is very special. It reminds us of where we come from and gives us hope that our new home and our old home will grow ever closer through encounters, projects and friendships.

Mapping of organisations operating in Malawi

Time and again, the idea arises of obtaining a better overview of the many organisations, associations, private individuals, etc. that are active in Malawi. This would not only improve our networking. Those who are active in the same region or on similar topics and tasks can exchange ideas and, ideally, learn from each other. It would also show how much 'power' and experience these many private and voluntary organisations have at their disposal.

Martin Schwarz from Malawi NGOs has now taken the initiative and started an experiment with Google Maps. Anyone who would like to participate and is not yet on the Malawi NGOs platform is welcome to contact me (Christiane) or Martin Schwarz directly (0049-160-5002311 or martin@ansbach-malawi-de). The more people who participate, the more helpful it will be! If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us!

Another task will then be to link the various homepages to the map or, in other words, to make it as easy as possible for anyone interested to find it.

New visa regulations for German citizens

Note on the updated travel advice from the German Foreign Office (AA) for Malawi:

German citizens have not previously required a visa to enter Malawi.

At the beginning of December, the Malawian government announced its intention to introduce visa fees for German citizens. The relevant regulations have not yet been enacted or published.

There have been reports of border officials already insisting on payment of USD 50 per person upon entry.



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The AA therefore recommends:

- Insist on a proper receipt if you are asked to pay visa fees.
- Immediately after entry, check the length of stay entered in the entry stamp in your passport and apply for an extension of your stay in good time within the period noted in order to avoid fees for overstaying the period of validity.
- If you have any further questions, please contact the relevant Malawian diplomatic mission abroad.

Homepage – Now available in German and English

You don't look at it every day, but perhaps some of you have already seen it. Our homepage is now available in German and English. Our aim is to reach out to non-German speakers, especially Malawians, and to link up with international organisations. After publishing our newsletter in two languages since this summer, this was the second step – further innovations will follow. If you have any comments or ideas, please contact Klaus Hess (hess@d-ma-g.de) or me (Bertels-Heering@d-ma-g.de).

Review of the general meeting and outlook for 2026

This year's annual general meeting (AGM) took place in Berlin in September. In addition to the usual formalities such as reports, cash audits and discharges, the members present and connected via video link unanimously elected a new board: the old board was confirmed in office unchanged.

At its constituent meeting, the board discussed in detail the experiences gained from the slightly modified format of our meeting in Berlin. The meeting with representatives of Malawi NGOs that took place the day before was rated as very positive. The goal for 2026 is to intensify (personal) exchanges with all those working for Malawi, and to do so not only once a year at our general meeting in Berlin, but perhaps also in cooperation with representatives of Umodzi wa a Malawi and others on Malawi's Independence Day. This event is not location-bound and takes place around 6 July. The board will discuss this at its January meeting and decide on dates (see website).

BMZ country meeting on Malawi on 1 October 2025

Twenty-one different organisations and institutions were represented, including the DMAg.

Birgit Gerhardus, Head of Division 213 at the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), welcomed the participants. The discussion served to prepare for the bilateral negotiations on the continuation of development cooperation on 2 and 3 December in Bonn.

She emphasised that the framework conditions for cooperation with Malawi remain challenging. The country has a very weak health care system, which leads to serious supply shortages, espe-



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cially in rural areas. At the same time, poverty continues to increase, while the economic structure remains poorly diversified and extremely vulnerable to external shocks. Malawi continues to be heavily dependent on subsistence agriculture, which is reflected in low employment and low incomes. The administration is weak and cumbersome, often lacking the necessary capacity and effective coordination. Although strategies and policy frameworks exist in many areas, they are often not implemented consistently. Corruption and nepotism also continue to be a structural problem.

The withdrawal of the USA from development cooperation, particularly in the areas of health, education and governance, is particularly serious. It is having a noticeable impact, especially on the health sector, and comes at a time when other international donors are also reducing their funding.

At the same time, it should be emphasised that cooperation with partner institutions in Malawi is working well and is appreciated, despite the difficult conditions. Most counterparts are committed, reliable and constructive. Germany enjoys a very good reputation in Malawi as a reliable partner with a high level of expertise. Coordination between donors and with the government is also going well overall and is an important factor in the success of development cooperation.

Sarah Bernardy, Head of Division 320 at the Federal Foreign Office (AA), gave a brief assessment of the elections in Malawi, according to which the opposition candidate Peter Mutharika won the presidency by a clear margin, but the results of the parliamentary elections are not yet available. However, a change in political course is not expected.

The AA is primarily involved in Malawi in the context of humanitarian aid and the promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Through the embassy in Lilongwe, the Federal Foreign Office supports projects for crisis prevention, conflict management and peace promotion, as well as programmes to strengthen civil society. In addition, cultural exchange and educational cooperation – for example through the Goethe-Institut and DAAD scholarship programmes – are promoted in order to strengthen social dialogue and sustainable development in Malawi.

Christian Zoll and Melanie Rauhut, Division 213, reported on the status of bilateral government development cooperation (DC) and the outlook. The BMZ supports Malawi in implementing its development strategy 'Malawi Vision 2063' and the Malawi Implementation Plan 2021-2030. It is based on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Climate Agreement and the AU's Agenda 2063. Bilateral government development cooperation addresses fundamental, systemic and acute problems in Malawi and focuses on the following thematic areas of action:

- **'Social protection'**, with the aim of improving the living conditions and self-help potential of poor and vulnerable households. The national Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP) is co-financed and supported as a central pillar of the Malawian social protection system. At the same time, the Malawian government is being supported in implementing and improving a coherent and more efficient social security system.
- **'Sexual and reproductive health and rights' (SRHR)** to improve universal access to and use of basic health services in the area of SRHR. Activities are being implemented to provide counselling, prevention and strengthen the rights and self-determination of women and



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girls. Malawi also receives support to strengthen health systems in the area of SRHR. Investments in SRHR infrastructure or contraceptives and medicines are financed through the Health Services Joint Fund, a financing mechanism involving various donors.

- **'Food security'** with the aim of ensuring universal year-round access to sufficient and healthy food through the Multisectoral Food Security Programme in Nsanje, Phalombe and Blantyre. Government institutions and non-governmental organisations are being supported in the transformation of agricultural and food systems in Malawi through two projects.
- **'Private sector and financial system development'** to increase income and employment, especially for poorer sections of the population in rural areas, with a focus on women and young adults. Start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in rural areas, as well as their associations and service facilities, are being supported. In a new approach, needs-based access to financial services for businesses along agricultural value chains will be promoted in future.
- **'Good governance'** with the aim of strengthening the management of public finances in budget management, tax revenue and contract management, as well as combating corruption.

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