



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

WELCOME REMARKS

DELIVERED BY

**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR MANGANI CHILALA KATUNDU
SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION**

AT THE

**2024 EDUCATION JOINT SECTOR REVIEW MEETING
*Theme: "Education for Impact"***

HELD AT

**BINGU INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE,
LILONGWE**

ON

5TH NOVEMBER 2024

SALUTATIONS:

- The Minister of Education, Honourable Madalitso Kambauwa Wirima, M.P.
- The Deputy Minister of Education, Honourable Nancy Chaola Mdooko, M.P.
- The Principal Secretary for Basic Education, Dr Rachel Chimbwete Phiri
- Outgoing Chair of the Education Development Partners - Madam Arianna Zannolini, FCDO
- Incoming Chair of the Development Partners – Mr Simon Molendijk, UNICEF
- All Development Partner Representatives
- Heads and Representatives of Bi-lateral and Multi-lateral Agencies
- Members of Parliament and Government Officials
- The 2024 JSR Keynote Speaker – Dr Grace Kaimila Kanjo
- Civil Society and Faith-Based Organisations
- Vice Chancellors and Representatives of education institutions
- Private Sector leaders
- Members of the Press
- Listeners following the proceedings on Education Broadcasting Station and on Zoom
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning.

It is a privilege to welcome you to the 2024 Education Joint Sector Review Meeting here at the Bingu International Convention Centre in Lilongwe, under the theme “**Education for Impact**”. Today, it is my humble duty to introduce the **Honourable Minister of Education, Madalitso Kambauwa Wirima**, who will address us on the education sector’s performance in the 2023/24 financial year. Before doing so, please allow me to share a few introductory remarks.

This gathering stands as a testament to our shared commitment to strengthening Malawi’s educational landscape and aligning our efforts with the vision set forth in Malawi 2063 and the National Education Sector Investment Plan (NESIP, 2020-2030).

Today, we bring together Government officials, policymakers, educators, development partners, and other stakeholders who share our vision of equitable, inclusive, and quality education for all Malawians.

It is particularly exciting that this Joint Sector Review Meeting serves as the first in a strategic series of activities to more prominently showcase our sector's contributions to national development and growth during this recently declared **National Education Month**. Over the coming days, we are all called to critically assess our performance in 2023/24 and to strategically plan how we will collaborate to navigate the 2024/25 financial year more effectively.

The theme “Education for Impact” has been thoughtfully chosen to remind us that the policies and programmes we implement should be transformative, creating tangible, lasting change in our education system. It is a call to action, urging us to move beyond "business as usual" and make decisions that directly benefit students, teachers and communities. As we gather here, we must remember that every intervention should lead to measurable improvements - whether in access, quality or inclusion - bringing us closer to the vision of a prosperous Malawi as outlined in MW2063.

As we reflect on the past year, our achievements are commendable. Primary enrollment has reached 5.42 million students, with a gender parity index of 1.04, demonstrating near-equal participation between boys and girls.

Our focus on equitable access yielded positive outcomes, with the number of operational Early Childhood Development (ECD) centers increasing to 13,213 nationwide.

In the area of teacher resources and school infrastructure, we see both encouraging progress and persistent challenges. At the primary level, the Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) remains high at 62, while the Pupil-Classroom Ratio stands at 105. These figures underscore the urgent need to enhance teacher recruitment and expand classroom construction. Teacher training has been a top priority through our Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes, aimed at equipping educators with essential skills.

Beyond enrollment numbers, our education sector is confronted with systemic challenges, particularly regarding digital infrastructure and resource equity. Currently, only 66% of primary schools have access to potable water, and many remain inaccessible during the rainy season. We are making strides in digitalisation, with an expanded Education Management Information System (EMIS) and efforts to automate national examinations, strengthening data management and educational planning.

In secondary education, although enrollment has increased to 538,800 students, the net enrollment rate remains at only 16.8%. We increased secondary school bursary provisions to support vulnerable students and addressed rural school access by constructing new secondary schools.

Our commitment to inclusivity remains strong, as we work to provide specialised teaching resources and construct additional resource centers for students with special needs.

As we engage in discussions over the next two days, we will delve into sub-sector reports detailing our progress in implementing last year's Joint Sector Review recommendations. We will collectively assess sectoral performance against NESIP targets and hear directly from students about the impact of our efforts on their educational experiences.

In closing, I invite each of you to actively participate in our discussions and share your insights as we tackle the critical issues facing our education sector.

Our conversations will lay the foundation for a robust and responsive education system that equips every Malawian child and educator with the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive in the global economy.

With those few remarks, it is now my distinct honour and privilege to invite the **Minister of Education, Honourable Madalitso Kambauwa-Wirima, M.P.**, to deliver her opening address. Honourable Minister, we eagerly anticipate your guidance, insights and vision as we engage in this critical dialogue to shape the future of education in our beloved nation.

Distinguished Delegates, please join me in welcoming the Honourable Minister.

Thank you and May God bless you all.