

46,000 CK farmers register customary land

By Jameson Chauluka

Over 46,000 farmers have registered customary land in line with the amended Customary Land Act.

The farmers, 70 percent of whom are women, have registered the land with support from Shire Valley Transformation Programme (SVTP).

Alice Kaunda, SVTP Communications Specialist, disclosed this when Deputy Minister of Lands Deus Gumba inspected land adjudication and demarcation exercises in Chikwawa District in preparation for establishment of irrigation farms under the programme.

"We have started the same process in Nsanje and, so far, we have registered at least 7,000 land parcels. This is the pilot phase of the newly amended land laws, especially the Customary Land Amendment Act which empowers local citizens to hold land. The plan is to consolidate the land parcels into 13 commercial farms or mega farms

for irrigation," she said.

Kaunda said the registration of land will help the government protect farmers from being exploited by people who would want to buy the land at cheap prices.

"Government knew that once we start construction of these huge and massive infrastructures, people from other areas will be interested in owning land here. It was, therefore, important that we secure the land through registration because once the farmers are issued with certificates, it will not be possible for them to sell it," she said.

Gumba said he was impressed with progress made in land registration processes as well as construction of irrigation infrastructure, saying Malawians stand to benefit from the investment.

"We have been saying that laws have to speak to the wishes of the people and that is why, in this programme, people have to register their land, form blocks and move into cooperatives. Once



IMPRESSED— Gumba (in red helmet)—Picture by Jameson Chauluka

we are done with the pilot phase in Chikwawa and Nsanje, we are going to other areas, notably Kasungu, Nkhata Bay and others, so that Malawians in rural areas should finally have a feel of officially holding land. Issues of land become tricky when someone

dies but registration will protect spouses and children from abuse," he said.

SVTP and the Ministry of Lands are working with customary land committees who are elected at local level to spearhead the land demarcation exercise.

By Deogratias Mmana

Latest Afrobarometer survey report, released this month, indicates that six in 10 citizens (62 percent) want domestic violence to be treated as a criminal matter rather than a private one.

The report also says 94 percent of Malawians say a man is never justified to use physical force to discipline a wife.

It also says Malawians believe that the Malawi Police Service is likely to take cases of gender-based violence (GBV) seriously.

The report further says four in 10 citizens say it is very likely that a woman who reports being a victim of rape, domestic violence or other GBV forms will be criticised, harassed or shamed by others in the community.

"Malawians see gender-based violence as the most important women's rights issue that the government and society must address," the report reads.

The report has been produced by Joseph Chunga, research fellow at the Centre for Social Research in Zomba, and Raphael Nedi, a researcher at the same institution.

The report adds that 65

Malawians for criminalisation of gender-based violence



LAUNCHED 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM— Kaliati (second left)—Picture by Emmanuel Simpokolwe

percent of citizens say that violence against women and girls is not a common occurrence in their community.

According to data from the Malawi Police Service, GBV

cases have risen from 13,002 between January and September 2021 to 15,178 cases for the same period in 2022.

Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare Minister Patricia Kaliati has, meanwhile, urged stakeholders to work together to address such cases.

Kaliati launched the 16 days of activism on Friday in Dedza.

She said despite efforts the government and stakeholders are making in addressing the problem of GBV, cases keep rising.

The country is commemorating the 16 days of activism under the theme 'Unite! Activism to End Gender-based Violence in Malawi'.

Afrobarometer is a pan-African non-partisan survey research network that provides data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance and quality of life.

GBV reportage impresses Mzimba welfare office

By Patience Lunda

The Mzimba North District Social Welfare Office has disclosed that it is receiving not less than two reports of gender-based violence (GBV) weekly, translating to about eight cases monthly.

According to the office, this is an indication that community members are aware of the importance of reporting GBV cases to law enforcers.

"We are making progress, in terms of dealing with gender-based violence cases," said Mzimba North District Social Welfare Officer Hellen Simwaka during the Mzimba North launch of 16 days of activism.

Mzuzu University organised the event in partnership with Plan International Malawi on Saturday.

"People are now reporting such cases because they have been sensitised to the dangers of gender-based violence," Simwaka said.

However, Plan International Malawi Youth Friendly Health Services Project Manager George Milinyu lamented rising cases of gender-based violence.

"We still have some gaps, some of which are perpetuated by culture and lack of resources," Milinyu said.

Meanwhile, Mzuzu University senior lecturer in the Department of Tourism, Cecilia Ngwira, has said the institution has established a committee to combat GBV targeted at students.

She said the committee will also address the issue of sex for grades.

Sixteen Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence started on November 25 and activities are billed to end on December 10.