

# Committee hails Shire Valley Transformation Project

MARTIN GELA JNR  
CORRESPONDENT

The Committee of Parliament on Budget and Finance says it is impressed with progress the multibillion kwacha Shire Valley Transformation Programme is making in Chikwawa District.

Speaking after touring the project on Sunday, the committee's chairperson Gladys Ganda said once completed, the project will turn the Shire Valley into the country's bread basket.

She said: "The visit was part of the committee mandate to monitor progress of developments on the ground for us to ensure accountability in the utilisation of resources approved by Parliament."

Ganda, who is Nsanje Lalanje legislator, said the irrigation project will not only benefit people in the Shire Valley but the country as a whole.

She said they have noted that progress has been slow because cyclones Ana and Gombe affected some of the construction works, especially at the intake at Kapichira Hydro Power Station dam on January 15 2022.

"So far, the work has to be re-done. However, looking at the



Part of the project currently under construction

PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN GELA JNR

remedial measures the project has put forth, as a committee we are confident that soon the Shire Valley will become the food basket for the nation," she said.

Ministry of Agriculture Principal Secretary responsible for irrigation, Geoffrey Mamba, said the first phase of the project involved the construction of the intake and six kilometres of the main irrigation canal, including two canals covering 52 kilometres at a

cost of \$234 million (K237 billion)

He said: "But the second phase we project the cost to be around \$285 million [K290 billion] of which the World Bank has already provided financing amounting to \$134 million [about K137 billion]."

"However there is a \$91 million [about K93 billion] deficit which government is negotiating with the African Development Bank [AfDB]. So far, the AfDB have pledged \$50 million [about K53

billion]."

Mamba said government expects to raise \$10 million (about K11 billion) from the private sector.

The \$563 million (about K570 billion) seeks to increase agricultural productivity and commercialisation for targeted households in the Shire Valley and to improve the sustainable management and utilisation of natural resources. ■



PHOTOGRAPH: NATION

Matola: Work together with management

## Minister encourages vibrant unionism in energy sector

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Minister of Energy Ibrahim Matola has encouraged strong unionism in the energy sector, arguing that it helps address industrial strikes that disrupt power supply.

He said this on Saturday when he presided over Electricity Supply Corporation of Malawi Staff Union (ESU) quadrennial congress at Mponela in Dowa.

He said: "When there is no communication, there is no interface between the union and the management, then there is blackout."

The minister further urged the workers to avoid prioritising protests, saying: "Work first, then you can protest, but not protesting then you expect to have salaries after that. It will not work."

Escom chief executive officer Kamkwamba Kumwenda hailed the ESU as one of the powerful workers' union in the country which has been providing checks and balances on the company.

He said: "The idea is that we should work together as a management and union. We should not be antagonistic, but complementary."

ESU president Charity Harawa asked Escom to minimise hiring temporary workers, blaming them for vandalism of the parastatal's facilities.

She said the temporary workers learn about the system and once their contracts expire, they engage in vandalism.

During the congress, Harawa retained her position following elections while Alex Chatsira was elected as her vice. William Mnyamula was elected secretary general while Cosmas Msendema is the treasurer general. ■

# Ministry of Health orders cholera vaccine

PATRICK LUNDA  
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Minister of Health Khumbize Kandodo Chiponda has said government has placed an order for cholera vaccine after the initial 2.9 million doses run out.

She said this in an interview on Thursday in Blantyre on the sidelines of a World Vision donation of cholera management and preventive products valued at K90.4 million.

However, the minister did not indicate when the oral cholera vaccine would be available in the country, saying it is in high demand by other countries as well.

She said: "We have finalised the process to acquire the vaccine as we have placed an order through World Health Organisation. We received 2.9 million doses which we have almost exhausted."

"I would not be able to say when the next doses will arrive because other countries are also waiting to receive. We will be able to tell

when the vaccine will be ready in due course."

Chiponda said the vaccine "is just an extra intervention, otherwise issues of cleanliness and sanitation are key to contain the spread of cholera."

On the donation, she commended World Vision for offering a well-rounded package to contain the pandemic through prevention and case management.

Ministry of Water and Sanitation director of technical services Alfred Mtilatila appealed to the public to embrace good hygiene practices.

"It is a known fact that cholera thrives in an environment that hygiene is not observed. Let us not just look at treatment, but scaling up sanitation and hygiene standards as preventive measures," he said.

World Vision country director Francis Dube said the donation was part of activities to complement government's efforts in the fight against cholera.



PHOTOGRAPH: PATRICK LUNDA

Dube makes a symbolic presentation of the donation to Chiponda

"Currently, as World Vision, we have put aside \$130 000 [about K130 million] for the cholera response and the items being handed over are worth K90.4 million. These will be donated across the country and help health

workers in executing their work well," he said.

The donated items are HtH, granula 16 and 18 gauge, drip stands liquid handwashing soap, and plastics gumboots, among others. ■