

Mepa orients MP's on access benefit sharing

CHARLES MKOKA
CONTRIBUTOR

Malawi Environmental Protection Authority (Mepa) has courted Parliament's Natural Resources Committee to lobby passing of access benefit sharing regulations of genetic resources on biodiversity.

The authority also appraised legislators on other frameworks in the sector.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) defines biodiversity as, "the variability among living organisms from all sources including, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems.

In his presentation when he introduced access benefit sharing regulations to the committee Mepa's Chifundo Chinyama explained that the benefits of biodiversity to humanity are enormous such as medicine.

Recent plant systematic studies in Malawi have revealed that Mulanje Mountain Forest Reserve and Nyika National Park—the country's first site to be gazetted as a protected area—are two sites endowed with diverse plant species.



PHOTOGRAPH: NATIONAL

Ministry staff captured during the engagement with parliamentarians

However, the two sites now bear the brunt to overcome invasive alien species that are threatening the ecology of both Mulanje and Nyika as biodiversity hotspots.

Chinyama said: "Access benefit sharing is a concept that emerged during the development of CBD. So sustainable use of biodiversity came in as a key consideration, especially to ensure bio-prospecting and resources exploitation would not cause harm to conservation and

surrounding communities."

He explained that the subsidiary Nagoya Protocol supports fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from utilisation of genetic resources globally.

According to Chinyama, once the regulations are passed as a law, a national authority will be put in place and will negotiate benefits on biological resources under a signed contract.

Parliament's Natural Resources Committee chairperson Werani Chilenga

said the committee wanted to know how the regulations differ from those that governed issues of forestry, fisheries and wildlife which are also part of the sector of environment in Malawi.

Director of Administration in the Ministry of Forestry and Natural Resources Hillary Namainja hailed the regulation as long overdue and important to the country.

It was supported by Shire Valley Transformation Project, a World Bank and Global Environment Facility programme. ■



PHOTOGRAPH: RITSANI GUNYA

Mirsha: We are for excellence

Invest in education —Experts

FATSANI GUNYA
STAFF REPORTER

Malawi should brace for tough times ahead if parents and guardians remain cozy to invest in the education of their respective wards, education experts have warned.

One of the education activists, Jonathan Makwiwa, who is also Malawi University of Science and Technology (Must) deputy Vice-Chancellor, said that Malawi's poor score on the international poverty index is closely related to the high levels of illiteracy prevalent in the country.

He said this on Thursday on the sidelines of a graduation ceremony of 27 Central High International School students held at the school's premises at Maone Park in Blantyre.

"When you don't educate these children, they become a burden not only to parents, but even to the nation because they will struggle in future," he said.

In his remarks, Central High International School head teacher Dinishe Misha pledged continued academic excellence from his institution.

"We take pride in being one of the institutions producing high caliber university prospects in the country. I hope this class will not be different from the others gone before them.

"Most importantly, it is the life skills and human values we try to instill in these learners that I think set us apart. Like they say, education is what remains in one's head long after the graduation day," he said.

Some students from the Class of 2021 that graduated on the day were reported to have already secured scholarships at international universities. ■

Judiciary commends Moot Competition

LUCKY MKANDAWIRE
STAFF WRITER

High Court Judge Michael Mtambo has hailed the invaluable support private law firms such as Ritz Attorneys at Law are rendering towards the provision of quality legal profession.

The judge was speaking at the High Court in Blantyre during the prize presentation of the inaugural finals of Ritz Moot Competition for students of Law School at the University of Malawi (Unima).

Mtambo said the quality of research and the authority during the presentation by the law students in the competition's final phase was a manifestation of how the profession was steadily progressing in the country.

"We are very happy with this initiative and the level of industry by the participating students and organizers. We are committed to give our support where needed," said Mtambo.

A partner at Ritz Attorney Wanangwa Hara said they were delighted with the launch of the competition, quality of commercial law research, drafting skills, oral advocacy and teamwork of the participating students.

"This moot is solid testament that we are on the right track and gives us energy to sponsor again for years to come. We are very proud and greatly honoured to pioneer a moot that promises excellence in commercial law practice in the country," said Hara.

Ritz Attorneys, Faculty of Law of (Unima) and the university's Students Law Society (SLS) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the moot with the desire to produce high quality lawyers who are well grounded in transactional, advisory and dispute settlement areas of commercial law

During the finals of the competition Bentry Ignatius Nyondo, a second year law student, was the overall best mooter while



PHOTOGRAPH: COURTESY OF RITZ

Nyondo receives his certificate from Mtambo

Chikondi Daniel Sato (4th year) came second. Precious Paul Kalulu and Chifuniro Chaponada came third and fourth.

Kate Chimoyo, a second year student emerged best oralist of the moot competition. All the winners

went away with certificates and cash prizes.

For being the overall winner, Ritz Attorneys also announced to offer an automatic placement for internship to Nyondo in appreciation of this achievement. ■