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BY FRANCIS NAMONDWE

**DEPUTY** Minister of Lands, Housing and Urban Development Mia has hailed the Shire Valley Transformation Programme, saying it will improve livelihoods of people in the project area and result in food security for the whole country. Mia officially handed over Chikwawa Physical Development Plan to the District Council. It is under the plan that the programme will be implemented in line with the devolution of powers from the central government.

The deputy minister said the programme is set to create jobs and construct schools and health centres, among others.

“President Lazarus Chakwera’s administration has been talking about creation of jobs and this is one of those projects that will help in that agenda. People in the five Traditional Authorities covered by the project will have to productively use their arable land with the guidance of the council.

“They will be harvesting enough and I am sure the Shire Valley will become the breadbasket of Malawi.

# Ministry hopeful on Shire Valley project



**OPTIMISTIC**—Mia (right) officially hands over the plan

It is a huge project that will surely transform this area,” Mia said.

Chikwawa District Council Chairperson Gerald Bede agreed with Mia that the project will end persistent hunger challenges in the Shire Valley which has a huge body of water flowing down to Zambezi River.

“Those with land along the river will have to share some portions with others so that the ultimate goal of the project is

accomplished. It is also pleasing to note that the project will also produce schools and health centres.

As a council, we are very much eager to work towards achieving its objectives,” Bede said.

On her part, Chief Director in the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Esmie Kainja, said the handing over of the Physical Development Plan from the Ministry of Lands to Chikwawa District

Council is a testimony that the ministry is eager to let decentralisation take place without any hindrance.

Kainja further hoped that the implementation of the project will be smooth as the council—which has better means of managing the land at district level—has been given the challenge of ensuring that all bottlenecks are removed.

“Oftentimes, there are excuses that councils do not have the capacity to

manage projects of his nature. Ministries do not want to devolve powers to the councils, but what has happened with this project indicates that it is possible to devolve powers to councils,” she said.

The development objective of the Shire Valley Transformation Programme for Malawi is to increase agricultural productivity and commercialisation for targeted households in the Shire Valley and to improve the sustainable management and utilisation of natural resources.

The project has five components which include irrigation service provision to finance the works, goods and services necessary to develop bulk irrigation and drainage infrastructure and land tenure and natural resources management.

In the first phase, the project is expected to develop over 43,000 hectares of land.

# UN dares Malawi on policy execution

BY YOHANE SYMON

THE United Nations (UN) has challenged Malawi to start implementing available policies that are aimed at closing the inequality gaps that exist between men and women in the country.

UN Women Representative in Malawi Clara Anyangwe made the remarks in an interview on the sidelines of a first-ever Feminist Academy Conference which was held in Mangochi yesterday.

The conference discussed how the government and other key stakeholders can create an enabling environment for women to participate in the macro economy of the country.

Anyangwe bemoaned that there are severe inequalities that exist between men and women which needs government to find a way of closing them.

“As a country, we need to critically look at the issue of feminism very seriously. We have very good policies like the Gender Equality Act. But we are lacking



**ANYANGWE**—We have very good policies—Picture by Kondwani Magombo, Mana

frameworks that can help in implementation and reporting on the progress made through the policies,” she said.

For instance, Anyangwe said Malawi has done well in increasing the enrolment of girls in primary schools. However, she said the country is not doing fine in terms of retaining the girls as evidenced by an increase in teenage pregnancies and child marriages.

In her remarks, Minister of Gender Patricia Kaliati said the government is aware of social and economic gaps that exist

between women and men in the country.

“As part of the reforms, we want to engage our counterparts to review the Procurement Act so that it can provide a certain percentage of tenders and other opportunities that would be competed among women. This can help to empower our women financially,” Kaliati said.

The conference was supported by ActionAid and facilitated by a number of gender and governance experts including Henry Chingaipe, Jessie Kabwila and Emma Kaliya.

## TODAY'S WEATHER

Expect windy and cool to mild conditions tonight and during early morning while windy and partly cloudy during the day due to a high pressure system which is expected to induce cool and fairly moist south easterly air mass in the next 24 hours.

**SHIRE VALLEY** (areas along Shire River and around Lake Chiuta and Chilwa) Warm conditions tonight and with windy during early morning. Windy and partly cloudy with chance of showers during the day.

**SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS** (Shire highlands, Kirk Range up to Dedza) Expect mild conditions tonight and during early morning. Windy and partly cloudy during the day.

**CENTRAL AREAS** (Lilongwe, Mchinji, Ntchisi, Dowa, Kasungu and part of Mzimba District) Cool and windy tonight and during early morning. Hot and windy during the day.

**LAKE SHORE AREAS** (Salima, Nkhosakota, Nkhata Bay, Likoma, Karonga, Mangochi) Mild conditions tonight and during early morning. Hot conditions during the day. Mwera winds expected in the next 24 hours.

**NORTHERN AREAS** (all areas in the north except lakeshore) Cold conditions tonight and during early morning. Warm and partly cloudy during the day.

| FORECAST TEMPERATURES |           |           |           |           |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| NGABU                 | BLANTYRE  | LILONGWE  | MANGOCHI  | MZUZU     |
| Min. 24°C             | Min. 20°C | Min. 16°C | Min. 22°C | Min. 13°C |
| Max. 36°C             | Max. 28°C | Max. 30°C | Max. 35°C | Max. 25°C |

**WIND:** South easterly

**Times for sunset and sunrise**  
Mzuzu sunrise 05:34 sunset 17:40  
Lilongwe sunrise 05:35 sunset 17:41  
Blantyre sunrise 05:30 sunset 17:36

Today's weather courtesy of Department of Meteorological Services