

REPORT ON JOINT UNDP/EU SUPPORT TO THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE IN MALAWI

1. *Brief project description*

- *UNDP/EU Development arrangement /Working Relationship*

European Union and UNDP have invested significantly in Malawi's stability, peace, and development in recent years, and continue to have a strong interest in ensuring that the country is able to build on its current development gains. EU and UNDP have provided both technical and financial support to the Public Affairs Committee (PAC) to strengthen systematic national-level mediation capacities, facilitate consensus on select issues of national contention, enhance public dialogue on and advocacy around the national consensus on contested issues, and build local capacities for violence prevention in the medium term.

At the country level, UN technical team held a project inception meeting on 6 August, 2015 with EU Delegation counterparts that generated a common understanding of the nature, focus and direction of the support, as well as on EU's reporting and visibility requirements.

- *PDA in the country: yes or no /arrangement*

Yes, PDA was recruited in 2013, but EU contribution to PDA salary commenced in 2015.

- *Course of action:*

Through facilitation and mediation, the Public Affairs Committee resolved potentially violent disputes and divergent views on key issues. Collaborative dialogue and conflict prevention has been enhanced at local level through trainings of insider mediators. Activities here included 'shuttle diplomacy engagements and behind-the-scenes facilitated meetings with Leaders of Executive, Legislature, Judiciary and Pro and Against Federalism factions to gain acceptance for national and regional forums on inclusivity and federalism.

The above actions were inclusive of both women and youth, thereby contributing to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework outcome on governance, stipulating that national institutions foster democratic governance for all, especially women and children by 2016.

- *Progress to date:*

The activities that have been implemented are as follows:

Interface technical meetings involving the executive, the Speaker and the judiciary - all three arms of government - were held (Speaker of Parliament : 19 Feb, and 22 July all at Parliament House; Head of State : 12 March at State House; Chief Justice : 24 July at High Court; Minister of finance : 5 February, all in 2015). Issues discussed involved constitutionalism, relationships between religious institutions, inclusivity and federalism, which are of national importance.

- Pre-consultative meetings with the Legislative leadership and other key stakeholders, to look at what has been suggested by the technical team for the regional and national follow-up conference on inclusivity and federalism. (Speaker of Parliament: 12 May; United Democratic Front : 19 May at Capital Hotel)
- Regional fora on inclusivity and federalism in 3 regions (North, South and Central) which attracted a total of 200 participants, which were more than the anticipated number. This was attributed to the importance and relevance of and interest in the theme. (15-16 June, Lilongwe Capital Hotel; 18-19 June, Blantyre Mount Soche Hotel; and 23-24 June, Mzuzu Hotel)
- 29 Women in faith (WIF) were trained in mediation and peacebuilding. Having gone through the training, 5 WIF were nominated to join PAC high level mediation panel. This is a first in PAC's 20-year history and a commitment to ensure that women are included in the peace building process and collaborative dialogue. (6-8 October , Lilongwe Golden Peacock Hotel)
- Technical and financial support has been provided to PAC secretariat to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of delivering development results. UNDP provided trainings in results-based management and financial reporting, resulting in timely quality progress reports from PAC that link impacts on the ground to intended outcomes. Furthermore, PAC managed to publicize the work carried out through press releases, newsletters and a documentary particularly on issues of governance and federalism.
- All activities reported on in this reported were fully funded by the UN, while upcoming activities for the second half of the project year will be funded by the EU.
- *Next steps:*

- ❖ Follow-up activities to enhance capacity of Insider Mediators and Dialogue facilitators
- ❖ Developing a shared minimum national agenda on contested issues
- ❖ Enhancing peace through violence prevention initiatives through dialogue, mediation and advocacy
- ❖ Strengthening sustainability of PAC Secretariat
- ❖ Ensuring effective project management and oversight

2. *Activities*

- *National officer recruitment, if applicable*

A national officer was not recruited for the project but there is a Programme Analyst assigned to the project at UNDP.

- *Training organization and training program outline*

PAC organized a three-day training (6-8 October , Lilongwe Golden Peacock Hotel) for “Women In Faith” peacebuilding network. A total of 29 women were trained as Insider Mediators. 5 women are members of PAC’s high-level gender-sensitive panel of mediators (“insider mediators”) and actively participated in mediation processes. This raised the visibility of women as mediators, which contributed to the appointment of one of the female mediators as Malawi’s Ambassador to Egypt.

Below is the training program outline:

- Introductions
 - Expectations and Experience sharing: Lessons from the field
 - Stages of Conflict-Fire Tool
 - Conflict Analysis-Concept & Tools
 - Conflict Analysis-Group Exercise
 - Conflict Handling Mechanisms
 - Nonviolent Communication-Why and How?
 - Practicing Nonviolent Communication
 - UNSCR 1325: 15 years on
 - Dialogue: Concept and Design
 - Facilitating Dialogue-Group Exercise
 - Way Forward-Mobilizing Women for Peace
- *ToT exercises- description (number of participants, target groups, time, location, etc)*

Not planned during the period under review

- *Skill building exercises description (number of participants, target groups, time, location, etc)*

A total of 29 “Women in Faith” drawn from all three regions of Malawi underwent a peace building training on the 6-8 October, 2015 at Golden Peacock

Hotel, Lilongwe. The participants were introduced to basic skills in building peace to ensure their voices are heard in peace building initiatives.

- ***Accompaniment of the newly trained IM***

The PDA provided accompaniment to the PAC 'insider mediators' through briefing and debriefing prior to and after mediation processes. As well as in reviewing strategies and facilitating scenario development exercises.

At regional level, PAC was involved in 'Insider Mediators, strengthening the Africa Peace and Security Architecture' workshop, which is a UN initiative.

PAC held at least four meetings with Speaker of National Assembly, Chief Justice, Head of State, and religious leaders on issues of national importance. Constitutionalism, relationships between religious institutions, inclusivity and federalism were some of the issues discussed during these meetings.

At least one Insider Mediator (IM) was involved in the meetings as an observer, at the same time identifying possible entry points for mediation on any contested issues.

- ***Specific information on : gender; Human rights, environment and natural resource related activities/targets***

In 2015, 29 women have been trained in mediation and peacebuilding skills, after a realization that most religious structures had minimal participation of women in their activities. This is contributing to the agenda of women's empowerment in the country.

3. Challenges in implementation

- ***Specific challenges and measures taken to overcome:***

PAC faced four main challenges during activity implementation: -

- 1) Political interference in the implementation of regional fora on inclusivity and federalism.
- 2) The technical committee suggested activities which were not anticipated such as Pre-consultation meetings for which there was no budgetary provision
- 3) The funding gap between July-August due to internal UN technical challenges created implementation challenges which resulted in having Bi-annual mediators meeting to review conflict analysis and scenarios, 2 high level round table sessions on collaborative leadership and dialogue, local leaders and youths training in conflict early warning

and response, and annual review meeting of conflict early warning monitors not being implemented.

Measures taken to overcome:

- 1) Pre consultation meeting to be held with government authorities
- 2) Proper budget breakdown for each activity
- 3) Project work flow disbursement plan

4. *Brief note on importance and significance the initiative has for the country*

- *UNDP /EU perspective*

The significance of this initiative cannot be overemphasized given the divisive politics and tribalism that has characterized the political landscape in Malawi. Quite often this has resulted in violent incidents, threats and the creation of 'no-go' areas for other political parties.

To date, the work of PAC has contributed in leveling the political ground through their continued facilitation of national conversations on contested issues. In addition, PAC's work on inclusivity and federalism debate has contributed significantly in demystifying and gaining a consensus on the federalism issue. PAC's work has earned the organization the credibility of being seen as a national watchdog and advocacy group on interface and for good governance.

- *Local and national counterparts perspective including testimonials*

The consultation on inclusivity and federalism has been significant and useful on two fronts – conflict prevention among stakeholders and promotion of a common understanding on the contentious issue itself. Various groups established in 2014 advocating against and for federalism have sobered down as witnessed in the media.

As a country, efforts will now be geared towards the current economic and political dimensions. On the other hand, different stakeholders gained an understanding that federalism does not mean splitting the country but is seen as a system of government to improve service delivery. This has brought the country to a certain level of calmness in terms of demands for federalism and secession that emerged after 2014 tripartite elections. However, the consultations on this topic have not ended for the demand may still arise at a later stage.

Interface meetings with the judiciary and parliament provided an opportunity to identify and address the root cause for the failure to

implement Section 65 of the Malawian constitution on crossing the floor in parliament. The political dynamics were revealed in the process and this helped PAC to enhance the debate on S65 when the Parliamentary Coalition between DPP and UDF was formed. The relevance of this is that the Speaker and the Chief Justice have encouraged PAC to hold a Joint Conference on S65 to move a step further in dealing with the issuance of injunctions prior to implementation of S65 in the National Assembly. The initiative under this component has improved transparency and accountability at constituency level.

To this end, PAC has dealt with triggers to violent conflict which, if not nipped in the bud, could potentially cause more serious civil strife.

The local media, government and opposition have been supportive of Inclusivity and Federalism debate which has been led by PAC in all three regions of Malawi.

PAC is perceived as “ the country’s authoritative interface democracy watchdog and advocacy group” see: The Nation newspaper (23/03/2015 :www.mwnation.com) , also Daily Times,(17/03/2015 ,www.times.mw)

- *Any other perspective*

The Public Affairs Committee spearheaded the crafting of the 2014 Lilongwe Peace Declaration titled “Taking a Stand Against Violence in Malawi During and After 2014 tripartite Elections”, which the twelve presidential candidates signed.

This work by PAC has been recognized by UN Secretary General who appealed to the candidates to “adhere to the Lilongwe Peace Declaration of 10 May to ensure that the elections are free from violence” see: <http://www.un.org/sg/statements/index.asp?nid=7687>.

5. *Any additional comments / suggestions*

The conflict prevention project spearheaded by PAC is critical in dealing with emerging political factors. For example, the notion of democracy is misunderstood by many to mean freedom without responsibility nor accountability, lack of intra party democracy, and regionalism, tribalism and nepotism. Therefore, continued support to PAC will go a long way in dealing with these issues of concern in a peaceful manner.

6. *Visibility*

- *Specific information as per the Guidance on visibility to the UNCT*

Both the Lilongwe Peace Agreement and the debates on Federalism and inclusivity processes involved appropriate stakeholders. Hence, the activities gained acceptance and popularity from government, CSOs, media, women

organizations and opposition political parties. This has raised PAC's credibility as a result of making their work visible. Additionally, PAC has produced a newsletter highlighting its activities as from 2012-2015 period. A copy of the newsletter and activities held can be obtained from their website www.pacmw.org

7. *Expenses –see attached financial report*

8. *Remaining budget –probability of using/not using full allocation*