



RESERVE BANK OF MALAWI

**WELCOMING REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN OF
ECAMA BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND GOVERNOR
OF THE RESERVE BANK OF MALAWI,**

DR WILSON T. BANDA

**2020 ECAMA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
SUN 'N' SAND HOLIDAY RESORT
MANGOCHI**

19TH NOVEMBER 2020

- The Guest of Honour, Right Honourable, The Vice President of Malawi, Dr. Saulos Klaus Chilima, Minister of Economic Planning and Development;
- World Bank Country Manager, Mr. Hugh Riddel;
- IMF Resident Representative, Dr. Farayi Gwenhamo;
- UNDP Resident Representative, Mr. Shigeki Komatsubara;
- The UNFPA Deputy Resident Representative, Mr. Masaki Watabe;
- The Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, Professor Winford Masanjala;
- The Director General of the National Planning Commission, Dr. Thomas Munthali;
- President of ECAMA, Mrs. Lauryn Nyasulu, and all ECAMA Executive members;
- Officials from the World Bank, IMF, UNDP and UNFPA;
- Government officials from the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development and other ministries;
- Officials from the Reserve Bank of Malawi;
- Officials from the Private Sector;
- Academicians;

- Officials from the Local and International NGOs;
- Professional Bodies;
- Representatives of the Media;
- All Invited Guests;
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

1. It is my pleasure on behalf of the Economics Association of Malawi (ECAMA) to welcome you all to the 2020 ECAMA Annual Conference on the theme “***GOING BEYOND MACROECONOMIC STABILIZATION: THE NEED FOR BUILDING RESILIENCE TO EXTERNAL SHOCKS***”. We are delighted to have you here to participate and share knowledge and ideas in this conference. Thank you for coming.

2. ECAMA, as a Think Tank on economic issues, is committed to encouraging open and productive debate informed by sound and evidence-based research on economic policies. ECAMA brings together economists, the business fraternity, development partners, and the public sector in Malawi. Our

mission is to provide practical solutions to Malawi's development challenges and opportunities.

3. The Guest of Honour, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, we are all aware the Corona Virus (Covid-19) pandemic has weighed negatively on the global economy, with global output expected to contract by 4.4 percent in 2020, according to the IMF's recent updates. The Malawian economy has not been spared either. Whilst domestic containment measures have significantly impacted on the economy, spillover effects from the regional and global economy have exacerbated the situation, not just affecting economic activity, but also the country's traditional exports, remittances, capital inflows and others. Economic activity is therefore projected to slow down quite sharply to 1.5 percent from.

4. The crisis has seen the Reserve Bank of Malawi, financial institutions and other service providers steering through uncharted waters and adopting unconventional business models. Responses have included policy rate cuts, review of

liquidity requirements, loan restructuring, and review of fees on digital platforms. All these measures have been aimed at limiting the impact of the pandemic on the country and supporting economic recovery.

5. Despite the Covid-19 outbreak, the banking system remains sound, stable and resilient. This notwithstanding, the foreign exchange market continues to experience seasonal foreign exchange supply pressures exacerbated by the pandemic. Meanwhile, the Reserve Bank of Malawi is committed to maintaining exchange rate flexibility to help absorb external shocks.
6. This year's theme, therefore, responds well to the growing call for action to identify measures that need to be undertaken for Malawi to enhance its ability to absorb these shocks.
7. **The Guest of Honour, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,** Let me express my sincere gratitude to Standard Bank Malawi, National Bank of Malawi, the World Bank,

UNFPA, Japanese Tobacco International Limited, and MyBucks Banking Corporation for the financial support that have rendered to ECAMA towards this Conference. The support of these institutions is highly appreciated. All participants and speakers, thank you for sparing time to be part of this Conference. Prepare yourself to be challenged, excited and inspired.

8. The Guest of Honour, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, finally, I would like to assure you that ECAMA remains committed to supporting and complementing efforts by government, development partners and the private sector to promote inclusive and sustainable development. I believe that we can all change the destiny of our economy if we all work together towards a common goal.

9. The Guest of Honour, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, with these few remarks, let me invite our Guest of Honour, The Right Honourable, Dr. Saulos Klaus Chilima, Vice President of the Republic of Malawi, who is

also the Minister of Economic Planning and Development,
to give his opening remarks.

10. Thank You!