

High Commission of India
LUSAKA

Basic facts about Malawi

Location and Neighbours: Southern Africa; bordered by Zambia, Mozambique and Tanzania

Size: 118,488 sq km with five inland lakes covering 24,208 sq km.

Climate: Tropical, cooler in highlands. Rainy season from November to May and, dry season from May to November.

Capital: Lilongwe

Date of Independence: 6 July 1964

Population: 14.9 million (2009 est), Population Growth Rate at 2.1%

Religion: Christian 79.9%, Muslim 12.8%, others 7.3%.

Major Tribes/ethnicities: Chewa, Nyanja, Tumbuko, Yao, Lomwe, Sena, Tonga, Ngoni, Ngonde.

Languages: Chichewa (national language), English (official language) and other local dialects.

Type of Government: Democratic Republic (Multi-party democracy since 1993). Malawi has presidential form of government and the President is elected by popular vote for a 5-year term. The first Vice-President is concurrently elected with the President. The President appoints the cabinet and can also appoint a second Vice-President, if required. Malawi has unicameral National Assembly with 193 seats. Members are elected by popular vote for a 5-year term. The last presidential and parliamentary elections were held on May 19, 2009. The constitution provides for a second house, a Senate of 80 seats, but it has not been created so far.

Major Political Parties: The ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was formed by ruling President Prof. Bingu wa Mutharika in May, 2004 after he resigned from the party- United Democratic Front (UDF) which was split. Opposition parties include United Democratic Front (UDF), Malawi Congress Party (MCP), Republican Party (RP), the Alliance for Democracy (AFORD), the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) the Movement for Genuine Democratic Change (Mgode), and People's Progressive Movement (PPM).

Name of President: H.E. Prof. Bingu wa Mutharika, Head of State and Head of Government.

Vice President: Mrs. Joyce Banda

Foreign Minister: Prof. Etta Elizabeth Banda

Economy: GDP growth – 6.57% (2010); 7.6% (2009), 9.7% (2008), 8% (2007), 8.5% (2006), 2.6% (2005), 7.1% (2004); **GDP** – about \$ 5.035 billion (2010 est);

GDP Per Capita (PPP) – US\$909 (2010-est.); US\$747 (2009 est), US\$714 (2008), US\$669 (2007), US\$637(2006) and US\$606 (2005)

Inflation– 8% (2010-est); 7.6%(2009), 9.9% (2008), 7.4% (2007), 14.1% (2006),15.4% (2005), 11.4% (2004);

External Debt – \$1.1 billion (2009 est), US\$1.0 billion (2008), \$ US\$870 million (2007), mainly with the World Bank and the African Development Bank. Earlier Malawi's external debt fell from \$3.2bn in 2005 to \$872 million in 2006 on account of debt write-off by World Bank and other donor countries in view of HIPC completion point.

Exports: \$912.4 million (2009),\$ 830 million (2008), \$796 million (2007), \$542 million (2006), 509 million (2005), 470 million (2004).

Imports: \$1,502 million (2009), \$ 1,327 million (2008), \$ 1097 million (2007), \$ 1055 million (2006), \$1006 million (2005), \$680 million (2004).

Main Export Items: Tobacco, sugar, tea, cotton, pulses, coffee, peanuts, wood products and fabrics and apparels. Partners: South Africa, USA, Germany and Egypt. Uranium production began at Kayelekera mine, owned by Paladin Energy of Australia in September, 2009. The first Uranium exports took place in mid-October,2009 to Canada.

Main Items of Import: Food, petroleum products, capital goods, consumer goods and transportation equipment. Partners: South Africa, Zambia, India and Tanzania.

Major Industry: Tobacco, tea, sugar, sawmill products, cement, consumer goods

Currency: Malawian Kwacha (MK); 1 US\$ = MK 153.00 (December, 2010)

Dated 05.05.2011
