



THE 2026 LAKESHORE BUSINESS LEADERS' SUMMIT REPORT

ABOUT THE LAKESHORE BUSINESS LEADERS' SUMMIT



The Lakeshore Business Leaders' Summit is a premier annual business event in Malawi, convened each April by the Malawi Confederation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (MCCCI)

As a flagship business conference in the country, the Summit serves as a dynamic platform that unites business leaders, policymakers, industry experts, entrepreneurs, development partners, and thought leaders from across the economic spectrum.

Its primary objective is to foster meaningful networking, facilitate knowledge exchange, promote collaboration, and strengthen capacity building among stakeholders dedicated to driving transformative change in Malawi's economic landscape.





INTRODUCTION

The Malawi Confederation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (MCCCI) convened its 4th Lakeshore Business Leaders' Summit at Sunbird Nkopola from 22–24 April 2026 under the theme, “Leading with Purpose: Harnessing the Power of Transparency and Accountability.” The Summit brought together 226 delegates drawn from both the public and private sectors, including Chief Executive Officers, Managing Directors, senior business executives, policymakers, development partners, and governance experts. High-level public-sector representation included the Vice President of the Republic of Malawi, the Minister of Industry, Trade, and Tourism, and Principal Secretaries and Directors from key government institutions. The Summit also hosted a guest speaker from Tanzania, the Chief Executive Officer of the Tanzania National Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Oscar Kissanga and keynote speaker, South African based business leader and turnaround strategist, Nyimpini Mabunda.

As one of Malawi's flagship business and policy dialogue platforms, the Summit provided an important forum for engagement among business leaders, policymakers, entrepreneurs, development partners, and industry experts from across the economic spectrum. The conference was designed to strengthen strategic networking, facilitate knowledge exchange, promote public-private collaboration, and enhance institutional and leadership capacity among stakeholders committed to advancing Malawi's socio-economic transformation.

The 2026 Summit was convened at a critical time, as Malawi continues to pursue broad-based economic transformation amid growing calls for stronger governance systems, institutional accountability, and ethical leadership. Against this backdrop, the Summit theme underscored the importance of transparency and accountability as foundational pillars for sustainable economic growth and private sector development. Discussions throughout the Summit emphasized the need to strengthen trust between the public and private sectors, improve policy predictability, curb corruption and inefficiencies, and foster a more transparent, competitive, and investment-friendly business environment capable of driving inclusive national development.

The successful hosting of the Summit was made possible through the support of several sponsoring institutions from the public and private sectors. Sponsorship contributions were received NICO Group, which was the lead sponsor, in partnership with Illovo Sugar Malawi; Reunion Insurance; Castel Malawi; Vanguard Life Assurance; Ethco, Malawi Bureau of Standards; Malawi Revenue Authority; EGENCO; ESCOM; UNDP; Linga Wines; Sunbird Tourism Limited and Coca-Cola Beverages Malawi. Their support demonstrated a strong commitment toward fostering dialogue and partnerships aimed at strengthening Malawi's business environment and economic governance systems.



OPENING OF THE 2026 LAKESHORE BUSINESS LEADERS' SUMMIT

The 2026 Lakeshore Business Leaders' Summit commenced with welcoming remarks from the then President of the Malawi Confederation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (MCCCI), Dr. Wisely Phiri, who underscored the importance of the Summit as Malawi's flagship business dialogue platform promoting collaboration between the public and private sectors. He highlighted that the Summit theme, "Leading with Purpose: Harnessing the Power of Transparency and Accountability," reflects the country's urgent need for ethical leadership, effective governance systems, and strengthened institutional accountability to drive sustainable economic transformation. He further noted that the Summit aligns with Malawi Vision 2063 and Sustainable Development Goal 16, while providing a strategic platform for policy dialogue, stakeholder engagement, and the development of practical solutions aimed at advancing inclusive growth and private sector development.

In subsequent remarks, the Minister of Industrialization, Business, Trade, and Tourism Hon. Simoni Itaye emphasized the importance of strong public-private sector collaboration in advancing Malawi's economic transformation agenda. He commended MCCCI for organizing the Summit and reaffirmed the Government's commitment to promoting a transparent, accountable, and competitive business environment through reforms aimed at improving the ease of doing business, strengthening institutions, and enhancing policy dialogue with the private sector. The Minister also highlighted the significance of the planned policy engagement and sectoral sessions in generating practical solutions and strengthening collaboration for sustainable economic development.





The Summit was officially opened by the Vice President of the Republic of Malawi, The Right Honourable Justice Dr. Jane Mayemu Ansah SC, JA (Rtd). In her official opening address, the Vice President emphasized the central role of the private sector in driving Malawi's economic transformation, noting that sustainable development can only be achieved through strong and structured public-private sector partnerships. She acknowledged the country's prevailing economic challenges, including trade deficits, low industrial output, and foreign exchange constraints, and stressed the need for accelerated industrialization, export diversification, and value addition. The Vice President further underscored that transparency and accountability are essential foundations for effective governance, investor confidence, and sustainable economic growth. She reaffirmed the government's commitment to strengthening policy consistency, improving the business environment, promoting transparent regulatory and investment frameworks, and institutionalizing structured dialogue with the private sector. She also encouraged delegates to focus on practical and actionable solutions during the Summit discussions and reaffirmed the Government's commitment to translating the outcomes of the Summit into meaningful reforms and measurable development results.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS ON THEMATIC TOPICS

The Summit featured a diverse lineup of speakers, panelists, and moderators who delivered presentations and engaged in discussions on various sub-themes aligned with the overarching theme of the event.

The Role of the Private Sector in Growing the Economy: A Case of Tanzania.

**Mr. Oscar Kissanga -
Tanzania National Chamber of Commerce
Chief Executive Officer**



In his presentation on “The Role of the Private Sector in Growing the Economy: A Case of Tanzania,” the Chief Executive Officer of the Tanzania National Chamber of Commerce (TNCC), Oscar Kissanga, highlighted the critical role of the private sector in driving Tanzania’s economic transformation and shared practical lessons that Malawi could adopt to strengthen private sector development. He explained that Tanzania has established strong institutional structures to support private sector growth, including an extensive chamber network with representation of over 50,000 members across districts and regions, as well as structured Public-Private Dialogue (PPD) mechanisms at district, regional, and national levels.

One of the key enablers in establishing this strong institutional structure was the Government of Tanzania’s decision to make membership in the TNCC mandatory for businesses, thereby strengthening private sector representation and coordination. The chamber also has representatives in China, Turkey, Dallas in the United States of America, and Brazil. He noted that these platforms have strengthened collaboration between the government and the private sector, enabled businesses to directly communicate challenges affecting operations, and contributed to policy and regulatory reforms that improve the business environment.

The presentation further emphasized the importance of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in facilitating large-scale infrastructure and development projects. Drawing from Tanzania’s experience, he encouraged Malawi to create more opportunities for local private sector participation in major national projects through strategic partnerships with the government and foreign investors.

He also highlighted the significance of streamlining business processes through one-stop investment centres, reducing bureaucratic bottlenecks, and strengthening institutional efficiency to attract investment. In addition, he stressed the need for targeted support to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), youth, and women-owned businesses through tailored policies, affordable participation frameworks, and capacity-building initiatives. He further urged Malawi to strategically position itself to benefit from the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) by strengthening industrial capacity, improving product competitiveness, and enhancing collaboration between the government and the private sector. He concluded by emphasizing that the private sector remains the engine of economic growth and that sustainable national development can only be achieved through trust, accountability, policy consistency, and strong public-private sector collaboration.

Leading with Purpose: Harnessing the Power of Transparency and Accountability

**Nyimpini Mabunda -
Business Leader and Turnaround
Strategist**



In his keynote presentation titled “Leading with Purpose: Harnessing the Power of Transparency and Accountability,” Mr. Nyimpini Mabunda emphasized that the government alone cannot drive economic transformation without strong collaboration with the private sector. Introduced by Dr. Kwanele Ngwenya, Chief Operating Officer of NICO Holdings, Mr. Mabunda stressed that sustainable economic growth requires purposeful partnerships between the government, businesses, entrepreneurs, and other stakeholders. He observed that while Governments play a critical role in creating enabling environments, policy consistency, and infrastructure development, the private sector provides the investment capital, innovation, entrepreneurship, and execution capacity necessary for economic expansion.

Drawing on practical examples from across Africa, including Nigeria, South Africa, Namibia, Uganda, and Benin, Mr. Mabunda demonstrated how public-private partnerships (PPPs) have transformed economies through infrastructure development, industrialization, and innovation. He highlighted that Africa’s challenge is not necessarily a shortage of capital, but rather a lack of confidence, trust, and conducive investment environments that encourage private sector participation. He therefore called for stronger engagement, transparency, accountability, and collaboration between Governments and businesses to unlock investment and accelerate development.

A central theme of the presentation was his challenge to the private sector to “take charge” in driving Africa’s economic transformation. Mr. Mabunda urged business leaders to move beyond waiting for Government interventions and instead become active partners in national development by investing boldly, supporting innovation, nurturing entrepreneurship, and taking calculated risks. He emphasized that the private sector must lead in identifying opportunities, developing bankable projects, supporting local industries, and creating jobs, particularly for young people. He further underscored the importance of leadership driven by purpose, innovation, and long-term vision. He encouraged African countries, including Malawi, to focus on industrialization, import substitution, entrepreneurship, and innovation as pathways toward sustainable growth. Particular emphasis was placed on empowering startups, SMEs, and young innovators, whom he described as critical drivers of future economic transformation. He challenged leaders in both the public and private sectors to intentionally develop talent, encourage creativity, and create enabling systems that allow innovation and enterprise to thrive.

The keynote session concluded with a strong call for collaboration, accountability, and decisive leadership. Mr. Mabunda urged delegates to move beyond dialogue and commit to practical actions that strengthen trust, improve the business environment, and accelerate progress toward long-term national development aspirations, including Malawi Vision 2063.

Key message: Sustainable economic transformation can only be achieved when the government and the private sector work together through purposeful leadership, transparency, accountability, and bold private sector participation.

Ethics, Integrity, and Transparency: Building Great Leaders for Malawi's Economic Transformation

Mr. Jimmy Lipunga - Investment Banker, Financial Analyst, Business and Leadership Consultant



In the session on “Ethics, Integrity, and Transparency: Building Great Leaders for Malawi’s Economic Transformation,” Mr. Jimmy Lipunga emphasized that Malawi’s economic transformation depends not only on policies and institutions, but also on the ethical conduct and integrity of leaders across both the public and private sectors. He argued that corruption, dishonesty, and weak governance continue to undermine economic growth, increase the cost of doing business, discourage foreign direct investment, and erode public trust.

Drawing from his experiences in both the public and private sectors, he stressed that ethical leadership requires courage, accountability, consistency in values, and the willingness to stand for truth even under pressure. He challenged participants to recognize that ethical failures are not only institutional but also personal, urging leaders to cultivate integrity in everyday conduct and decision-making. Mr. Lipunga further noted that sustainable economic transformation cannot be achieved in an environment where unethical practices are normalized, warning that corruption weakens national cohesion, worsens poverty, and deprives the country of the full benefits of its economic opportunities, including mining and industrial development.

Following his remarks, Betty Chinyamunyamu highlighted the practical challenges businesses face in maintaining ethical standards within Malawi’s operating environment. She explained that ethical businesses often incur higher costs due to unfair competition from informal and unregulated players, corruption in procurement systems, and barriers to accessing foreign exchange and export markets. Despite these pressures, she emphasized the long-term value of integrity, noting that ethical organizations build trust and credibility with customers and partners. She called on government and regulators to create safer systems for reporting corruption, incentivize integrity through recognition and awards, and strengthen the formalization of industries to promote accountability and fair competition.

Key message: Ethics, transparency, and principled leadership are essential foundations for building resilient institutions, restoring investor confidence, and driving Malawi’s sustainable economic transformation.



Rules of Engagement: Governance as a Catalyst for Leadership and Growth

Ms. Agnes Sentala -Reserve Bank of Malawi Director – Pension Compliance and Support



During the session titled “Navigating Leadership and Governance: The Rules of Engagement for Growth and Transparency,” delegates explored the critical role of governance frameworks in strengthening leadership effectiveness, institutional credibility, investor confidence, and sustainable economic growth. The presentation emphasized that governance should not be viewed as a barrier to growth, but rather as an enabling framework that provides clear rules, promotes accountability, reduces uncertainty, and supports strategic leadership and decision-making. The presenter highlighted that effective governance systems are built on key principles such as transparency, accountability, responsiveness, participation and inclusivity, innovation, and adherence to the rule of law. Reference was made to international and regional governance frameworks, including the OECD Principles of Corporate Governance, the IMF Good Governance Framework, and the Malawi Code II, while also linking the discussion to Malawi Vision 2063, which identifies effective governance systems and institutions as critical enablers of national development.

In the panel discussion, participants underscored the importance of strengthening governance systems at both institutional and operational levels to support effective leadership and business sustainability. The discussion highlighted that governance frameworks enable organizations to operate with greater confidence, consistency, and strategic focus, while also improving accountability and stakeholder trust. Panelists further emphasized the need for Malawi to develop more bankable and well-structured investment projects capable of attracting long-term institutional capital, particularly from pension funds and other domestic investors.

Key message: Strong governance systems create trust and predictability, which are essential for attracting investment and driving economic transformation. Delegates were encouraged to strengthen institutional transparency, improve stakeholder engagement mechanisms, embrace digital governance platforms, and ensure consistent enforcement of laws and regulations.

The Art of Stakeholder Engagement in Leadership: Driving Shared Solutions for Malawi's Economic Growth

Mr. Phillip Madinga - Standard Bank Chief Executive Officer



In the session titled “The Art of Stakeholder Engagement in Leadership: Driving Shared Solutions for Malawi’s Economic Growth,” delegates examined how effective stakeholder engagement can drive national transformation. The presentation emphasized that while stakeholder engagement is often discussed, it is less frequently practiced, yet when managed well it delivers impactful change by balancing individual and sometimes conflicting needs with the greater good of shared value.

The call was made to revive the Private Public Dialogue Forum (PPDF) and ensure it becomes more impactful by strengthening alignment around shared vision and priorities, enhancing trust through transparent and inclusive governance, facilitating collaborative innovation, and promoting sustainable transformation that advances growth, social equity, and environmental stewardship.

The discussion stressed why stakeholder engagement matters: economic transformation cannot be achieved by government or business leaders acting alone; sustainable progress requires collaboration among government, private sector, civil society, communities, and development partners; and effective leadership today is defined not only by decision-making power but by the ability to engage stakeholders and build consensus.

Panelists highlighted the key ingredients of effective engagement, including strategic communication, active listening, empathy, negotiation, facilitation, integrity, and accountability. They stressed principles such as clarity of purpose, inclusivity, transparency, mutual value, and trust-building, alongside practical approaches like stakeholder mapping, structured dialogue platforms, creation of Technical Working Groups (TWGs), and co-creation workshops. Challenges such as misaligned incentives, low trust, information asymmetry, and weak follow-through were also acknowledged.

The proposed PPDF structure was presented, with quarterly TWG meetings, unresolved issues escalated to a Steering Committee chaired by H.E. the President, and thematic priorities such as gender and FDI integrated into the framework. The Secretariat would be housed in MCCI, supported by government ministries, private sector representatives, and development partners.

Panelists from the energy, banking, and manufacturing sectors shared practical experiences, demonstrating how strategic partnerships, continuous dialogue, and stakeholder mapping can help resolve challenges and promote sustainable growth. They emphasized that effective stakeholder engagement is more than convening people; it is about building alignment, driving collective action, and creating shared solutions that benefit the nation.

Key message: Malawi's future depends on leaders who can convene, collaborate and connect diverse voices around a shared vision of prosperity. An effective PPDF will require intentionality, ownership, inclusivity of SMEs and other stakeholders, and stronger collaboration between government and the private sector to ensure dialogue translates into meaningful economic development and long-term national progress.

SALIENT ISSUES FROM THE BREAKAWAY SESSIONS

The Summit was structured to facilitate direct engagement between business leaders and policymakers, creating a platform for constructive dialogue on issues critical to Malawi's economic transformation. The policy engagement sessions provided a focused forum for private sector leaders, government ministers, industry stakeholders, and development partners to deliberate on key sectors shaping the country's development trajectory. Through open discussions and targeted engagements covering Industrialization, Business, Trade and Tourism; Cross-Cutting Issues; Energy and Mining; and Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development, the sessions sought to strengthen policy alignment with private sector priorities, address existing bottlenecks, and identify practical and actionable strategies for promoting economic growth, sustainability, competitiveness, and inclusive prosperity. The engagements also reinforced the importance of public-private collaboration in driving reforms and creating an enabling environment for investment and enterprise development in Malawi. The following were the key outcomes of the breakaway sessions, which were subsequently presented to the delegation by Dr. Dorothy Chapeyama.

1. INDUSTRIALIZATION, BUSINESS TRADE, AND TOURISM



Malawi's economic structure reflects a small but critical industrial base, with industry (including manufacturing and mining) contributing about 16 % of GDP of which manufacturing itself accounts for roughly 9–12 %, significantly lower than global averages. At the same time, Malawi runs a large and persistent trade deficit, importing key inputs such as fertilizers, pharmaceuticals, and fuels, which far exceed export returns and strain foreign exchange reserves. Strengthening local production of high-value goods from medicines to fertilizers offers a pathway to reduce import dependence, build export capacity, and stimulate industrial growth. In this context, strategic policy choices around government incentives, import substitution, investment approvals (such as rights issues for key firms), and the review of PPP concession arrangements and timelines are essential to unlocking Malawi's industrial potential and enhancing economic resilience.

Salient issue(s)	Key Recommendation(s)	Key stakeholders
<p>Implementation of Public-Private Dialogue Forum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representation within the PPD framework should be merit-based, balanced, and reflective of sectoral priorities. Revitalize and strengthen the Manufacturers Association by enhancing its institutional capacity and effectiveness within the Chamber and the PPD framework. The PPD structure should be supported by Sector Technical Working Groups (TWGs) including Agriculture, Energy, and Mining, serving as specialized platforms for in-depth technical deliberations. These TWGs will feed into the main PPD platform, ensuring discussions are evidence-based and well-coordinated. To enhance coherence and strengthen advocacy, other private sector associations should be aligned or integrated under the Chamber's umbrella, thereby promoting a unified and coordinated voice in engagements with government. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MCCCI Ministry of Industrialization, Business and Tourism



The high cost of logistics and the broader cost of doing business remain significant constraints to export competitiveness. As a result, many businesses are inclined to focus on the domestic market rather than pursue export opportunities.

- Explore and develop water transport solutions, particularly along existing inland waterways, as a cost-effective alternative to road freight. This would reduce transportation costs and ease pressure on existing infrastructure.
- Revitalize the railway network through private sector participation. While investor interest is evident, government must improve the timeliness and efficiency of its decision-making processes to facilitate faster implementation.
- Develop and upgrade airport infrastructure in key tourist destinations to improve accessibility and unlock growth potential in the tourism sector.
- Strengthen government-private sector coordination by accelerating the digitalization of administrative processes. Streamlining bureaucratic procedures will reduce delays, improve predictability, and enhance efficiency, while collaborative efforts supported by private sector expertise can drive the development of transparent, responsive, and modern systems.

- PPPC
- Private Sector

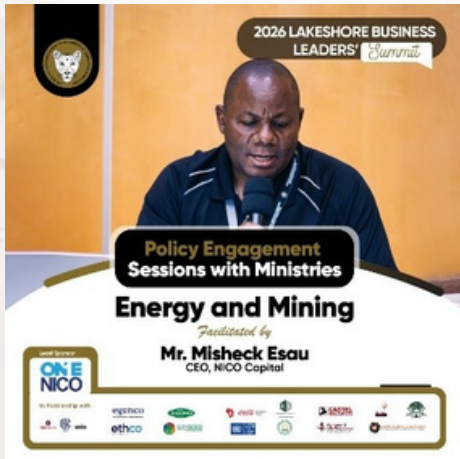


<p>Policy misalignment is contributing to excessive taxation within the domestic production sector while inadvertently favoring the importation of finished goods over local manufacturing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry of Industrialization, Business, Trade, and Tourism will collaborate closely with relevant ministries and agencies to ensure greater policy coherence and alignment. In this regard, the Ministry requested the Chamber to formally submit detailed information highlighting specific areas of policy misalignment for consideration and appropriate action. • Malawi must strengthen its competitiveness by addressing the multiple barriers encountered throughout the export process, which continue to constrain performance in international markets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Industrialization, Business, Trade, and Tourism • Industry players • MCCI
<p>The inability to export consistently and fully participate in the AfCFTA is largely driven by low production volumes among SMEs, despite strong interest and willingness to engage in regional trade.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In establishing the National Commodity Exchange, government should work in close partnership with the private sector (PPP), leveraging its expertise in sourcing, aggregation, and market linkages to ensure the platform operates efficiently and delivers strong, competitive markets for tradable commodities. • Strengthen private sector partnerships (P2P) to improve produce aggregation, efficiency, economies of scale, and market access, with the Chamber facilitating collaboration. • Promote stronger partnerships between large enterprises and SMEs to enhance value addition, expand market access, and build more inclusive, integrated, and efficient supply chains. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Industrialization, Business, Trade, and Tourism • MCCI • Industry players

<p>Poor communication for Private Sector Engagement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government should utilize the Chamber as a key communication channel with the private sector. • Additionally, government should ensure timely communication to enable the private sector to adequately prepare for participation in engagements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government • MCCI
<p>21 day period taken by the Malawi Bureau of Standards to facilitate some processes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bureau informed the session that it has now automated its service delivery processes to reduce turnaround time and improve efficiency. • Furthermore, the Bureau emphasized that MCCI should disseminate this information to its members to enhance awareness and facilitate better preparedness for compliance and service utilization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MBS • MCCI



2. MINING AND ENERGY



Mining contributes a small share to GDP (around 1%), but Malawi has strong potential in minerals such as uranium, rare earth elements, graphite, coal, and limestone. The government is promoting reforms and new investments to grow the sector, but progress is limited by energy shortages, infrastructure gaps, and regulatory challenges. Below are the issues that were discussed and the recommendations Facilitated

Salient issue(s)	Key Recommendation(s)	Key Stakeholders
Lack of local participation in the mining sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a Private Sector Mining Investment Fund to mobilize resources and drive investment into mining ventures. • Create a dedicated fund to support private sector initiatives, ensuring access to finance for growth and expansion. • Encourage Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) to leverage shared resources, expertise, and risk-sharing for sustainable development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government to establish Sovereign Wealth Fund, Pension funds, Insurance funds • Banks • Retail investors • MCCI as secretariat for private sector funds
Lack of structured markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create structured markets for minerals • Enforce guidelines to tame illegal trading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government • Regulator/Mining Authority • Industry players

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate the establishment of mining sector investment fund to help mobilize funding for local investors i.e purchase of machinery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government Industry players Financiers Fund managers
<p>Licenses given to firms without capacity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The government should institute reforms to flush out non-compliant licensees. A directive should be issued to guide individuals and entities seeking to apply for licenses, ensuring clarity, transparency, and adherence to regulatory standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Mines Mining Regulatory Authority
<p>Misalignment of policies and challenges in execution</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align policies and enforce regulations to bring sanity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chamber of Mines MCCCI Ministry of Mining and Mining Regulatory Authority
<p>Lack of coordination fueling illegal mining activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timely publishing and sharing of MWEITI report with stakeholders to increase transparency and awareness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treasury Ministry of Mining Chamber of Mines MCCCI

<p>Lack of support to local manufacturers within the energy sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the Buy Malawi initiative to support local industry and encourage import substitution. • Introduce targeted investment incentives for mining companies to attract more investments into the sector. • Increase funding for the Electricity Generation Company (EGENCO) to strengthen energy generation capacity. • Amend the Electricity Act to modernize the regulatory framework and align it with current energy sector needs. • Establish a Technical Working Group (TWG) to coordinate energy sector reforms and project implementation. • Prioritize high-impact projects such as Mpatamanga and Kamwamba to ensure stable and reliable electricity supply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESCOM • Ministry of Energy • MRA • MCCCCI • EGENCO • MEPA • Ministry of Energy • IPPs/energy investors • MERA
<p>Lack of infrastructure for charging electric vehicles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a TWG • Engage fuel retailers for potential investments into electric vehicle charging facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PUMA • MERA • MCCCCI • ESCOM • EGENCO

3. AGRICULTURE IRRIGATION AND WATER DEVELOPMENT

2026 LAKESHORE BUSINESS LEADERS' Summit

Policy Engagement Sessions with Ministries
Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development
 Facilitated by
Mr. Ronald Ngwira
 MD, Illovo Sugar Malawi

Lead Sponsor: ONE NICO

In Partnership with: EGENCO, MCCCCI, ESCOM, MERA, MRA, MEPA, Ministry of Energy, IPPs/energy investors, MERA.



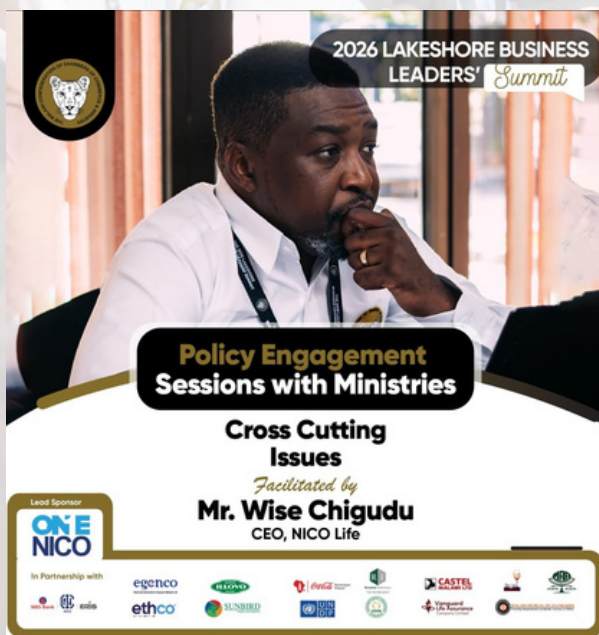
While the Malawi Vision 2063 emphasizes the development of highly productive and commercialized agricultural systems with strong linkages to manufacturing, the sector remains largely subsistence-based and rain-fed, with transformation slower than anticipated. Agriculture contributes roughly 29% of Malawi's GDP and employs nearly 80% of the rural population, yet productivity challenges, limited access to inputs, and weak value chain integration constrain growth. Strengthening agro-processing, commercial farming, and strategic grain reserves presents a key opportunity to enhance food security, stabilize prices, and drive industrial growth. To achieve these outcomes, Malawi must address critical gaps in policy, regulatory frameworks, and governance mechanisms that enable public-private investment, transparency, and measurable progress. Refer to the table below are the issues that were discussed and the recommendations

Salient issue(s)	Key Recommendation(s)
Inadequate Financing in the Agriculture sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce regulations requiring banks to allocate a defined percentage of their portfolios to productive sectors such as agriculture, mining, energy, and agro-processing. This should be supported by incentives, including adjusted liquidity reserve requirements and revised prudential limits. • Establish a government-backed concessional fund (similar to Uganda's Reserve Bank model) to de-risk agricultural lending and attract greater participation from commercial banks. • Explore Islamic finance models based on profit-and-loss sharing as an alternative, interest-free financing mechanism suited to smallholder farmers and cooperatives. • Redirect lending from the Export Development Fund (EDF) and Development Bank more meaningfully toward productive agricultural sectors, rather than concentrating on large-ticket corporate transactions. • Align exchange rate management policies to incentivize export generation and discourage practices that undermine forex repatriation.
Limited Market Access and Structured Markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize access to finance and market access as a unified, inseparable agenda, rather than treating them in silos. • Build a price discovery mechanism to stabilize commodity prices and reduce seasonal volatility, particularly for maize. • Make a definitive policy decision on ADMARC's role and future to remove uncertainty in the grain market. • Develop structured contract farming arrangements with mega-farms to guarantee supply for strategic grain reserves. • Shift agriculture from commodity-level trading towards brand-building and value-added exports to generate more foreign exchange.


Smallholder Farmers- Empowerment and Structure


- Accelerate the formation of well-organized, commercially oriented cooperatives, modeled on successful examples from Ethiopia and other countries, with co-investment from both government and the private sector.
- Build smallholder farmers' capacity to design bankable projects, meet financial standards, and scale production to levels that attract investment.
- Establish local farmer associations with legal ownership and maintenance responsibility over irrigation schemes to ensure sustainability after construction.
- Prioritize export demand intelligence by identifying market needs first, then working backwards to determine what to produce, rather than producing first and searching for markets later.
- Invest in extension services and soil information systems so farmers know what to grow, where to grow it, and for which market.
- : Develop Malawian-owned off-takers to retain foreign exchange earnings within the country and reduce transfer pricing leakages.

4. CROSS- CUTTING ISSUES



Malawi faces a critical need to mobilize long-term investments into productive sectors, particularly agriculture, infrastructure, and industrial development, to drive economic transformation. Current constraints include restrictive pension fund regulations, underdeveloped project financing frameworks, and limited institutional capacity within key government ministries. Strengthening development finance institutions, improving regulatory frameworks for infrastructure investment, and building internal technical capacity are essential to ensure that public and private resources are efficiently deployed to high-impact projects. Strategic reforms can unlock investment, create jobs, and accelerate Malawi's progress toward its Vision 2063 objectives. Below are the issues that were discussed and the recommendations Facilitated by Mr. Wise Chigudu.

 <p>Salient issue(s)</p>	<p>Key Recommendation(s)</p>
<p>Pensions funders are reluctant to invest in infrastructure development mainly because of lack of incentives such as tax reliefs, conflicting laws and governance issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To address these issues, the central bank has placed a mandatory policy requiring pension funds to invest a minimum of 5% in infrastructure. Pension funds may only channel investments into infrastructure through Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) managed by the private sector. • Infrastructure development should be managed by the private sector to ensure efficiency, innovation, and sustainability. • Innovative financial products: Financial institutions should innovate and develop flexible financial products, rather than completely reforming pension funds, which currently are not obligated to invest in infrastructure development. • To encourage investment, there is a need for continuous governance monitoring against set Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). • The government should establish Sanction and Accountability Laws (SALs), with accompanying enforcement mechanisms, to curb policy inconsistencies and strengthen investor confidence.
<p>Real estate development without industrialization poses as a mismatch in development which hinders investment in productive assets such as hotels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be intentional alignment between the State and infrastructure development, with government ensuring harmony between policy frameworks and investment objectives.
<p>Political interference for National Development Bank</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NDB should be constituted with a board that elects its own Chief Executive Officer, structuring the Bank as a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) with participation from commercial banks and financiers to support long-term investments. This framework will also enable development banks to evaluate pension fund-backed long-term projects, thereby strengthening the pipeline of viable investments.

 <p>Lack of funding for feasibility studies to improve project bankability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MITC should compile bankable projects from the existing compendium and enhance the sharing of information on available projects with the private sector. • Projects should be de-risked through active private sector collaboration, recognizing the private sector’s key role in making projects bankable. • Public–Private Partnerships (PPPs) should be reformed to effectively address issues related to intellectual property rights and strengthen investor confidence. • Establish a Project Preparation Fund to improve the bankability of projects and attract sustainable investment.
<p>Exporters face a lot of in-country barriers hindering export growth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamline export processes by establishing a single coordinating entity to manage all procedures, thereby reducing red tape and simplifying requirements for exporters.
<p>Limitations of Forex availability in the formal sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultations between RBM and the Confederation on next steps • MCCCCI to lobby for a waiver and allow businesses to quote in USD
<p>Lack of required skill sets for trustees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RBM plays a pivotal role in enhancing skills and expertise through the Trustees Development Program, which is mandatory for all trustees. • Secretariat should be capacitated to effectively fulfill its mandate, with investment advisors playing a critical role in guiding financial strategy and strengthening institutional capacity.
<p>Forex generating projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seed production • Restricting the transportation sector by rehabilitating the railway line • Identify the exportable commodities that Malawi already produces and exports, and issue an executive order to prevent farmers from side-selling pigeon peas, coffee, rice, and groundnuts. Farmers should be required to sell these crops to ADMARC, which will serve as the central buyer and distributor

CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

The summit provided an important platform for constructive engagement between the public and private sectors on key issues affecting Malawi's economic development. Through presentations, panel discussions, and policy dialogue sessions, participants emphasized the importance of collaboration, stakeholder alignment, and shared responsibility in addressing national challenges and advancing sustainable growth.

The discussions highlighted the need for stronger public-private partnerships, effective coordination mechanisms, and action-oriented dialogue platforms such as the proposed Public-Private Dialogue Forum (PPDF). The summit further reaffirmed that achieving Malawi's development aspirations requires inclusive participation, innovation, accountability, and collective commitment from government, the private sector, development partners, and all stakeholders.

Participants expressed optimism that the resolutions and recommendations from the summit will contribute towards creating a more conducive business environment, strengthening economic resilience, and accelerating national transformation in line with Malawi's long-term development agenda.

As a way forward, Malawi Confederation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (MCCCI) will continue engaging relevant stakeholders and advocating for the implementation of the key issues and recommendations that emerged from the summit discussions.

