



Position Paper: Democratizing Public Policies and Laws for Resilient Governance in an Era of Donor Aid Fatigue

Our Vision

Malawian communities enjoy access to laws and policies, climate-resilient health systems; protection of human rights under enforceable laws; and good governance.

Our Mission

Empowering Malawian communities with access to laws and policies, climate-resilient health systems, protected rights, and accountable governance through evidence-based services, research, and advocacy.

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The Imperative: Guarding Scarce Resources Through Democratic Governance

In an era of mounting donor aid fatigue, Malawi faces a stark reality: external resources are dwindling while domestic challenges; poverty, climate vulnerability, and governance gaps persist. With aid historically comprising a significant portion of the national budget, the time has come to shift from dependency to self-reliance. The bottom line is clear: the limited resources we have must be guarded jealously through robust, transparent, and participatory governance systems.

Democratizing public policies and laws is not optional, it is essential. This means moving beyond elite-driven decision-making to empower ordinary citizens with accessible information on laws and policies across key sectors, including health, climate change and environment, good governance, and human rights. TI's strategic focus on policy and legal consultancy, research, advocacy, and service delivery positions us to lead this transformation.

Strong governance safeguards public funds, minimizes leakages and ensures equitable allocation. Without citizen oversight, even well-intentioned policies falter amid corruption risks and weak accountability, issues amplified by aid reductions. By investing in informed citizenry, we foster ownership, reduce waste, and build resilient institutions capable of delivering on Malawi's development aspirations in light of Malawi 2063.

Strategic Pathways: From Awareness to Action at the Grassroots

TI advocates a two-pronged approach to localize policies and laws for a strong strengthened local governance system.

1. Capacity Building for Grassroots Structures

Area Development Committees (ADCs) and similar local bodies are pivotal in managing the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and other resources. In July 2026, we will train these structures in partnership with councils, traditional leaders, and stakeholders on their roles in project identification, prioritization, implementation, monitoring, and accountability. This includes familiarization with CDF guidelines, community needs assessment aligned with District Development Plans, and techniques for transparent financial management.

Empowered ADCs will bridge the gap between policy and practice, ensuring CDF projects reflect genuine local priorities rather than top-down directives. This democratizes resource management and enhances community ownership.

2. Convening Dialogues for Local Policy Engagement

In the last quarter of 2026 TI will organize a high-impact one-day conference focused on development policy at the local level. This platform will bring together grassroots structures, ordinary citizens, civil society, councillors, and duty-bearers to discuss policy contents, implementation challenges, and reform opportunities.

Coordinated by local councils, these conversations will spark sustained interest in policies among citizens, fostering ongoing engagement beyond one-off events. By making laws and policies accessible through simplified summaries, community forums, and digital tools we ignite public discourse and demand for accountability.

These initiatives align directly with TI's themes and will yield measurable outcomes: increased citizen participation, improved governance scores, and more effective use of scarce resources for health, food security, environmental resilience, and rights protection.

Call for Partnership

Stakeholders: Government agencies, donors, CSOs and private sector actors are invited to collaborate with Transparency Initiative (TI) Malawi. Together, we can build governance systems that withstand aid volatility and deliver tangible development.

1. Support Capacity Building: Fund or co-facilitate ADC training programs.
2. Endorse the Conference: Join as co-convenors or participants to amplify local voices.
3. Amplify Advocacy: Champion policy reforms for greater transparency in public finance and CDF management.

Contact us today to explore partnership opportunities. Let us democratize policies, empower communities, and secure Malawi's governance future.

Transparency Initiative (TI) Malawi

Empowering Communities / Advancing Accountability

Signed: 17th April, 2026