



STATEMENT BY

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND TRADE

HONOURABLE JOSEPH MWANAMVEKHA M.P.

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE GATEWAY
SHOPPING MALL IN LILONGWE**

MONDAY, 15TH DECEMBER, 2014

- **Your Excellency the State President, Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika**
- **Your Excellency the First Lady, Madam Gertrude Hendrina Mutharika**
- **Cabinet Colleagues here present**
- **The Chief Secretary to the Government, Mr. George Mkondiwa**
- **The Secretary for Industry and Trade, Mr. Cliff Kenneth Chiunda**
- **Mr. Dye Mawindo – Chairman, MPICO Ltd**
- **Mr. Jimmy Lipunga- Chairman, Old Mutual**
- **The Dean and All Members of the Diplomatic Corps here present**
- **All protocols Observed**

Your Excellency, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

Words may not be enough to express how pleased and privileged I feel to be part of this memorable occasion at which **Your Excellency** will be presiding over the official opening of the Gateway Mall. First of all, I would like to sincerely thank **Your Excellency** for gracing this opening ceremony in spite of your busy schedule. My humble responsibility this morning is to request **Your Excellency** to officially open this magnificent shopping mall. However, I would like to seek **Your Excellency's** indulgence that I say a few words before you address the audience and thereby officially open the Gateway Shopping Mall.

Let me start by offering my heartfelt congratulations to Malawi Property Investments Company Limited (MPICO) and Old Mutual for investing in this beautiful and magnificent infrastructure, and above all else, seeing the project to the end. I know it

was not an easy road, but you showed resilience to ensure that your dreams and aspirations were realized. Apart from being an early Christmas present for the people of Lilongwe, the shopping mall will change the face of this side of the city while facilitating vibrant economic activity which this country desperately needs.

Your Excellency, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

This occasion is, therefore, memorable because it marks MPICO's diversification of its property portfolio which was concentrated in office space for renting to both the Government and the private sector. This is in line with the dreams and aspirations of **Your Excellency's** government and those of the people of Malawi to diversify the country's economy. I would, therefore, like to encourage other investors to emulate MPICO's example and venture into infrastructure projects of this nature which the country so desperately needs.

In the compendium of bankable projects that my Ministry recently produced under **Your Excellency's** direction, there are several bankable infrastructure projects that investors can choose from. Among the major projects that are listed in the compendium are; the development of an airport city at Lumbadzi, construction of a new airport in Monkey-Bay, construction of a dry port in Liwonde, rehabilitation and reconstruction of several railway lines, dredging of the Shire-Zambezi Waterway, construction of bus terminals and service areas, construction of high rise flats, and development of amusement parks just to mention a few. In all these projects, investors will get a return on their investment while contributing to the realization of sustainable economic development of the country.

Your Excellency, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

The compendium also has projects from other sectors like energy, environment and climate change management, mining, agriculture, water development, tourism, manufacturing, financial services, transportation, media and communication. I would,

therefore, like to encourage investors to take a serious look at these projects as they are the priority sectors that the Government of Malawi has identified within the context of Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS II). It is my considered view **Your Excellency** that the challenges that we are facing now will be a thing of the past if the country's investment efforts are directed towards the priority areas I mentioned earlier. Changing the fortunes of this country is not a six-month job as some would want to make us believe. It is going to be a long hard road requiring the concerted effort of every patriotic Malawian pulling in one direction. There is a Chinese proverb which goes like *"The person who says it cannot be done should not interrupt the person doing it,"* and as Napoleon Hill said, *"Whatever the mind of man can conceive and believe, it can achieve"*.

On the subject of the contribution of the Gateway Shopping Mall to the economic development of this country, **Your Excellency, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**, the Government of Malawi expects new investments, such as this Mall, to create employment, generate additional tax revenues and enhance linkages with domestic firms and SMEs so that their products find their way to the market. Government is keen to see forward and backward linkages in the supply chain of products, involving domestic producers, including SMEs and cooperatives. In doing so, Gateway Shopping Mall will indirectly create more jobs when such domestic firms engage more labour for their operations to increase supply. In this regard, this shopping mall will live by its name: a gateway to more jobs, more business linkages and more wealth creation.

Your Excellency, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me encourage the private sector to think outside the box and take advantage of expanded regional market opportunities such as those provided by the COMESA, SADC, preferential market access arrangements such as the Tripartite Free Trade Area which will be launched soon, the European Union under the Everything but Arms (EBA), the United States of America under the African Growth and Opportunity Act

(AGOA), China and India's preferential market access offers and other preferential trade agreements.

Apart from taking advantage of the above-mentioned market opportunities, I would like to challenge the private sector to be innovative and aggressive in producing value added products for both the domestic and foreign markets. **Your Excellency**, why should our private sector focus on importing products, like fish, when we can produce our own gem, the chambo, whose demand keep on soaring? Am aware that some companies like Maldeco Aquaculture Limited are producing the Chambo in cages but the current quantities do not satisfy the domestic and foreign demand for the Chambo. Why should the private sector only wait for Government tenders and contracts instead of producing value added products and engage in import substitution? In normal circumstances Government tenders should only supplement private sector's business and not be the core business. How well is our private sector responding to incentives and opportunities offered by Government? My simple message is, the world is marching forward, and I would request the private sector to match with it. We need to be forward looking, innovative, and where possible, as MPICO has demonstrated, diversify our business portfolios.

Your Excellency, it is not my intention to take away the limelight on this auspicious occasion but let me conclude by once again commending MPICO and Old Mutual for their investment and for joining those who make things happen. It is my sincere hope that the private sector will heed Government's rallying call and complement its efforts in addressing the challenges being faced by this country. As Joshua T. Marine once said *"challenges are what make life interesting and overcoming them is what makes life meaningful."*

With these few remarks, it is my singular honour and privilege to request **Your Excellency** to address this gathering and officially open the Gateway Shopping Mall.

Thank You, **Your Excellency** and may God bless us all.