

## **MAKING PUBLIC GOVERNANCE FOR DEVELOPMENT**

As one of the Constitutional Bodies like Human Rights Commission, Electoral Commission and Law Commission, the Office of the Ombudsman was established to maintain and consolidate democracy. We are watchdogs of abuse of power which would threaten the foundation of democracy, rule of law and good governance. Our vision is that we should be recognized as a leader in the enforcement and promotion of good administrative practices, rule of law, good governance and respect for human rights.

The office of the Ombudsman plays an important role in improving Public Service Management. Public officers and institutions are kept on guard as any issue of administrative injustice or maladministration might be investigated by the Ombudsman.

After realizing the link between democracy and development, the Office of the Ombudsman signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) to strengthen accountability and transparency of democracy through the use of citizen led assessments at national and local level. With this, it is hoped that the office will make public institutions and agents to be more accountable to the citizenry.

The office faces a number of challenges in the discharging of its functions namely:

1. **Low funding:** other recurrent transactions (ORT) from government which is the core funding of our activities. This somehow derails the pace within which the office would have carried out its activities.
2. **Obsolete and inadequate equipment:** a big challenge especially now that we are opening two regional offices in Lilongwe and Balaka.

3. **Non Compliance of Determinations thus**, negatively impacting on people's right to access justice.
4. **Failure by some officials to implement recommendations in a timely manner** which also impacts on people's right to access to justice as justice delayed is justice denied.
5. **Lack of decentralization** leaving out most of the poor people that live in the rural areas.
6. **Capacity of employees:** there are a number of employees who need to undergo specialized training. However this has not been done.

Despite the challenges the office plans to do the following measures:

1. **Lobby for increased funding** from both Government and co-operating partners.
2. **Continue enhanced dialogue**, engagement and persuasion with Controlling Officers, Heads of Departments and Institutions
3. **Continue implementation of capacity development programmes** in order to strengthen and upgrade staff skills so that the Office provides quality client oriented services.
4. **Further decentralize services** and offices.
5. **Establish Ombudsman Focal Point/desk officers** and their alternate in collaboration with responding institutions and also desk officers for our regional offices.
6. **Ensure utilization of modern Information Communication Technology (ICT).**
7. **Ensure the establishment of a Gender and Child Desk** within the Office of the Ombudsman.

## CONCLUSION

It is hoped that the above write-up has introduced you to the Office of the Ombudsman, (Malawi) and that you will join

hands with us to enable the Office remain relevant to the Malawi citizenry and effectively contribute to the realization of the Vision 2020 and the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy [MGDS] in as far as upholding good governance and rule of law; and promotion and protection of human rights is concerned.