



MALAWI

COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION
BENCHMARKS FOR DEMOCRATIC LEGISLATURES

FINAL REPORT



Contents

SUMMARY	1
I. GENERAL	5
II. ORGANISATION OF THE LEGISLATURE	9
1. Procedures and Sessions	9
2. Committees	11
3. Political Parties, Party Groups, Cross-Party Groups, and the Opposition	12
4. Parliamentary Staff	13
III. FUNCTIONS OF THE LEGISLATURE	14
5. Legislative Function	14
6. Oversight Function	15
7. Representational Function	17
8. Parliamentary Assistance, Networking and Diplomacy	18
IV. VALUES OF THE LEGISLATURE	19
9. Accessibility, Openness and Engagement	19
10. Ethical Governance	20
RECOMMENDATIONS	22
STAKEHOLDERS	25
APPENDIX A	27
APPENDIX B	28
OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT POLITICAL AND MANAGEMENT LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE	28
APPENDIX C	29
CAPACITY BUILDING PROPOSAL FOR ICT DIVISION	29

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SUMMARY

“A Parliament that works for the attainment of the aspirations of the people of Malawi”

The Goal of the Parliament of Malawi, Strategic Plan 2021-2026¹

The Parliament of Malawi fulfils its fundamental responsibilities of legislating, overseeing the Executive, and representing the people. It achieves a lot with limited resources. It has strong political and administrative leadership with a vision of where improvements are needed and a strategic plan² on how to make those improvements. The Parliament has strong relationships with other parliaments, international parliamentary organisations, development partners and civil society, who support the improvement plan's delivery.

The Parliament has greater independence after the Parliamentary Service Act 1998³ increased the Legislature's powers. However, the Executive has used its power over the Legislature critically, such as limiting funding and refusing to agree to parliamentary sessions. The Parliament should have the power to set its budget, call itself into session and appoint the Auditor General. These powers would increase its ability to scrutinise the Government and legislate effectively. The Parliament Building is relatively new and purpose-built. It is bright and accessible, with a spacious chamber. However, there are shortfalls in the infrastructure available, limiting the efficiency and effectiveness of the Parliament. For example, more offices for Members or committee rooms must be needed.

Rules and procedures are simple, effective and followed. Standing orders are kept up to date with regular reviews and amendments. Staff benefit from a code of conduct. There should be something similar for Members. Significant technological advances for the Parliament have occurred in the last few years, accelerated by COVID-19. There are more plans for further digitisation of the institution, including electronic voting, which will hopefully bring gains in efficiency. The ICT Division needs urgent skills investment and capacity-building, particularly in specialist areas such as cyber security.

There needs to be a greater level of knowledge and skills, to enhance the effectiveness of the Parliament. Staff are dedicated and hardworking and have benefited considerably from capacity-building support. Developments such as the Parliamentary Budget Office are considerable improvements. But there is a need for more development, particularly in specialist skills and knowledge. Similarly, Members have had training and support to develop their skills, but ongoing training is needed to keep skills up to date, train new Members and provide specialist knowledge.

The Parliament's oversight function has significantly improved in recent years, with committees now sitting regularly, each with a clerk and research support. The public and media praise committees' scrutiny work is relevant and timely. The committees mandated by the Constitution are particularly respected. Joint committee sittings were seen as very effective. But committees are limited in their capacity and need more committee rooms, regular sitting, specialist/expert support, and skills development for Chairs, Members and staff. With more capacity, emerging issues and legislation could be scrutinised. There needs to be a higher priority and more resources for follow-up of committee recommendations to make scrutiny more effective.

The Parliament of Malawi compares well with other legislatures in the number of laws that it passes. Evidence shows that bills need more time for proper consideration. Waiving bills through with the required time for Members and other stakeholders to examine the detail leads to more robust legislation.

Bills need ample time and independent and expert analysis to allow Members to make considered and informed judgements and amendments. There needs to be some clarification about the representative function of Members both by the public and by Members. The public has high expectations of Members, seeing them as the gatekeepers to public services. Malawi has a centralised public service, blurring the lines between local and national service provision and accountability. This issue makes it hard for Members to represent their constituents effectively and could lead to corruption. There need to be clear rules to protect Members and ensure that Members from all backgrounds can support their constituents equally. Awareness campaigns would provide clarity of roles for the public, and capacity-building programmes would help Members advocate for their constituents and raise awareness about their work. There are plans for constituency hubs to give the Parliament a presence and help Members perform their constituency role.

Paying a daily sitting allowance (DSA) is a cheap and straightforward way to reimburse Members for their expenses. Still, it limits the ability of the Parliament to, for example, increase the number of sitting days of committees or provide capacity-building training. A more flexible system could benefit Members and increase the capacity and effectiveness of the Parliament.

1 Strategic Plan of the Parliament of Malawi 2021-26 – available on request – see Appendix A for details

2 Strategic Plan of the Parliament of Malawi 2021-26 – available on request – see Appendix A for details

3 Parliamentary Service Act. (2014). [online] malawilii.org. Available at: <https://malawilii.org/akn/mw/act/1998/35/eng@2014-12-31>

Malawi has an impressively open and accessible system, but users say it is still hard to get the information needed despite access to information law. There were problems accessing the documents and evidence required for this report, and the media and other stakeholders confirmed this. The Parliament's website has been redesigned and is currently populating with content for a new release in May. Making it live is urgent, and it should include basic information such as when the Parliament is sitting, how to visit and details of Members. There needs to be more information, openness and transparency about the workings of Parliament, as well as political parties and Members' allowances and benefits.

Strong leadership and cross-party commitment exist to increase and support women's representation in Parliament. While representation currently stands at 22%, many women are in senior leadership positions in the Parliament, Government and other important roles. An active and well-supported women's caucus supports women Members, works to increase women's representation and campaigns on issues of importance to women. With a young population, more work could be done to increase engagement with young people and support young Members. A youth caucus would provide this support. More comprehensive engagement work should be a priority to find ways to engage a broader range of people in the work of the Parliament.

There is a high-profile national campaign in Malawi to fight corruption. Parliament plays a crucial role in fighting corruption through bodies such as the Public Accounts Committee and evidence from independent institutions like the anti-corruption bureau and human rights commission. All these functions and bodies must work efficiently, effectively and with adequate resources and capacity building. Findings and recommendations must be followed through, with further scrutiny if necessary.

The Parliament of Malawi is remarkably effective with minimal resources. Members and staff are determined and creative. They are open to learning from others and sharing their knowledge and experience. There have been impressive reforms, such as the Parliamentary Service Act, but the Parliament needs to be more independent, with greater powers over its administration and budget. Significant knowledge, capacity, resource and infrastructure gaps make the Parliament less effective and efficient. The Strategy aims to address some of these. The Parliament needs to be more open and transparent about its workings and engage the people of Malawi more. This report recognises the significant improvements and the ambition to make further improvements. There are still challenges, and this report recommends further strengthening the Parliament of Malawi.

Background

The Assessment was requested by the Speaker and organised by parliamentary staff. There was an initial technical assessment against the benchmarks. The CPA Headquarters Secretariat appointed Susie Latta and Clive Barker to undertake a review from 27th February to 3rd March 2023. They met with the Speaker of the Parliament, the Right Honourable Catherine Gotani Hara MP and many Parliamentarians. From the administration, they met the Clerk of Parliament, Mrs Fiona Kalemba, senior management and other staff members. There were also meetings with stakeholders, including representatives of the Electoral Commission, media and civil society groups. Critical documents were also reviewed, including the Constitution of Malawi⁴, the laws of Malawi, the Standing Rules of the Parliament, the Strategic Plan of the Assembly 2021-2026 and many other reports and materials. The report below is a summary of the main findings of the Assessment. A list of some of the constitutional and legal mandates for the Parliament can be found in Appendix A ([page 27](#)).

Acknowledgements

The Parliament chose to assess itself against these benchmarks. The positive approach to the Assessment process and the aims of continuous learning and improvement are admirable. The benchmarks will hopefully provide a valuable basis for constructive comparison and understanding between parliaments across the commonwealth and allow for sharing experiences and good practices, ultimately leading to a more robust democracy.

The CPA Secretariat would like to thank all the stakeholders who participated in this Assessment. A special thanks must go to the Speaker of the Parliament, the Right Honourable Catherine Gotani Hara MP, for initiating the Assessment; Clerk, Mrs Fiona Kalemba, Clerk of Parliament, for her support of the Assessment and to Lovemore Nyongo, Gloria Dzidekha, Gift Chimodzi and many others for all their organisation and coordination.

Support and Follow Up

Following the publication and consideration of the findings of this report, and within the boundaries of financial constraints, the CPA is committed to supporting the Parliament in strengthening its democratic processes. As such, the CPA stands ready to enable the Parliament to take forward these recommendations where requested and appropriate.

4 www.malawi.gov.mw. (n.d.). Malawi Government Information and Services - Constitution of Malawi - Constitution of Malawi. [online] Available at: <https://www.malawi.gov.mw/index.php/resources/documents/constitution-of-the-republic-of-malawi>

Political, Economic and Social Context

Malawi is in south-central Africa, with a population of 20.5 million and growing⁵. The capital is Lilongwe. Tanzania borders the country to the north and northeast, Zambia to the west, and Mozambique to the southeast and west. Lake Malawi forms most of its eastern border. It is an ethnically and religiously diverse country. Malawi's economy is mainly agricultural, with 85% of people living in rural areas; most are engaged in subsistence farming. The main exports are tobacco, tea, sugar and beans, with fuel, fertiliser, medicines and machinery being the main imports. Malawi's significant challenges are population growth, fighting corruption, HIV/AIDS and climate change. It has suffered recent shocks, including COVID-19, increasing global prices following the Russian invasion of Ukraine and extreme climatic events such as floods and landslides. Malawi benefits from significant but decreasing international development assistance.

Malawi became independent from Great Britain in 1964 and became a Republic in 1966. It is a Presidential Republic. After a period of one-party rule, there were multi-party elections in 1994. A new Constitution was adopted, strengthening the rule of law and increasing the separation of powers between the Legislature, Judiciary and Executive. It included solid independent institutions such as an Ombudsman, Electoral Commission and Human Rights Commission.

The Parliament of Malawi is unicameral and has 193 Members. The Parliament is in Lilongwe. The Parliament Buildings were purpose-built by the Chinese Government and have been occupied since May 2020. Members serve a five-year term⁶ and are directly elected to single-member constituencies by a first-past-the-post voting system. Along with other democratic institutions, the Parliament has grown more robust and confident in recent years. Previously it was part of the Office of the President. Still, in 1998, the Parliamentary Service Act strengthened the Legislature's powers and increased the separation of powers between the Executive and the Legislature⁷.

In May 2019, general elections were held to elect the President, National Assembly and local councillors. However, the result of the presidential election was annulled by the courts due to evidence of irregularities, and fresh elections were ordered. Rerun elections in 2020 led to a change of party of government⁸. The Malawi Congress Party won 59 seats and led a coalition which included the United Transformation Movement (UTM 5 seats) and 33 independent Members. The Opposition is led by the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP – 56 seats) and includes the United Democratic Front (UDF - 10 seats), the People's Party (PP – 4 seats), the Alliance for Democracy (1 seat) and some independent Members. The Speaker of the Parliament since 2019 is the Right Honourable Catherine Gotani Hara MP.

The administration is led by the Clerk, Mrs Fiona Kalemba, supported by Deputy Clerks for Corporate Services and Parliament Services. **The Parliament has an ambitious 2021-2026 Strategic Plan with the goal of having 'A Parliament that works for the attainment of the aspirations of the people of Malawi'.**



- 5 Worldometers.info. (2019). Malawi Population (2019) - Worldometers. [online] Available at: <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/malawi-population/>
- 6 www.malawi.gov.mw. (n.d.). Malawi Government Information and Services - Constitution of Malawi - Constitution of Malawi. [online] Available at: <https://www.malawi.gov.mw/index.php/resources/documents/constitution-of-the-republic-of-malawi>
- 7 [Parliamentary Service Act 1998](#)
- 8 Jiyani, M. (n.d.). The High Court of Malawi Nullifies May 2019 Presidential Election in Landmark Judgment | OHRH. [online] Available at: <https://ohrh.law.ox.ac.uk/the-high-court-of-malawi-nullifies-may-2019-presidential-election-in-landmark-judgment/>

COVID-19 Response

In response to the spread of COVID-19, the National Assembly was closed for a month, and some Members tragically lost their lives. Hybrid proceedings were established utilising Zoom for remote participation, with some Members joining in person. All Members were connected virtually and given internet devices and allowances to overcome connection challenges.

There were considerable technical challenges to getting everyone connected, which were overcome by the staff's hard work and determination, particularly by the ICT Division. There was also support from development partners. Parliament has benefited from the technical advances, and the lessons learnt have helped handle the current cholera outbreak.



I. GENERAL

Elections

Members of the National Assembly are popularly elected through free and fair elections where all citizens can vote in a free and secret ballot. This convention is provided for in the constitution of Malawi and law⁹. A court ruling overturned the results of the 2019 Presidential Elections. International monitors did not observe the 2020 elections because of COVID-19 restrictions, but a consensus of peers judged them to be ‘credible elections’ that met international standards for validity and transparency.

Elections are managed by the independent Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC)¹⁰, provided for in the Constitution¹¹. It is an independent body strengthened after the challenges of the 2019/2020 elections. Commissioners oversee it; it works internationally to share good practices and learn from peers¹².

The MEC is not mandated to monitor candidate expenses and party and campaign finance. The MEC is consulting on plans to change ward and constituency boundaries and increase the number of constituencies from 193 to 229¹³. This is proposed because of population growth. As mentioned throughout this report, a greater number of Parliamentarians will compound the institution’s current resource constraints regarding DSA, research, infrastructure and staffing, among many other areas.

The Political Parties Act 2018¹⁴ requires parties to declare campaign and party finance, but this law must be fully implemented and enforced. The Members are required to report party funding to a registrar of political parties, but this position has yet to be established.

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Parliament should scrutinise the implementation of the Political Parties Act 2018, to ensure that it is placed well before the next election.

There are no restrictions on candidate reliability based on religion, gender, ethnicity, race or disability¹⁵. The age limit for standing is 21 years. This should be reduced to 18 years old, in line with the age limit for voting¹⁶. There are some economic barriers because of the high cost of running for election. There are programmes to encourage women, young people and people with disabilities to stand as candidates, and they receive a 50% discount on candidate fees. The two main political parties at the last election had manifesto commitments to increasing the representation of women¹⁷.

Separation of Powers, Immunity and Natural Justice

The Constitution separates powers between the Executive, Judiciary and Legislature. A Member of Parliament cannot serve as a judicial officer or a civil servant¹⁸. No member is required to swear a religious oath against their conscience. A non-religious affirmation is available¹⁹.

The Constitution and legislation protect members from arrest before, during and after parliamentary sittings²⁰ and give them

9 www.malawi.gov.mw. (n.d.). Malawi Government Information and Services - Constitution of Malawi. Section 6, 75. [online] Available at: <https://www.malawi.gov.mw/index.php/resources/documents/constitution-of-the-republic-of-malawi> and [Parliamentary and Presidential Elections Act 1993](#)

10 [Malawi Electoral Commission](#)

11 www.malawi.gov.mw. (n.d.). Malawi Government Information and Services - Constitution of Malawi. Section 75. [online] Available at: <https://www.malawi.gov.mw/index.php/resources/documents/constitution-of-the-republic-of-malawi>

12 <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/lessons-from-malawi%27s-fresh-presidential-elections-of-23-june-2020-en.pdf>

13 Anon, (n.d.). Conclusion of Constituency and Ward Boundary Review Exercise and Submission of Report to the National Assembly – Malawi Electoral Commission. [online] Available at: <https://mec.org.mw/2022/11/11/conclusion-of-constituency-and-ward-boundary-review-exercise-and-submission-of-report-to-the-national-assembly/>

14 Political Parties (Amendment) Act, 2022. (2022). [online] malawilii.org. Available at: <https://malawilii.org/akn/mw/act/2022/1/eng@2022-02-04>

15 www.malawi.gov.mw. (n.d.). *Malawi Government Information and Services - Constitution of Malawi*. Section 40 (3) and 51 [online] Available at: <https://www.malawi.gov.mw/index.php/resources/documents/constitution-of-the-republic-of-malawi> pp.

16 www.malawi.gov.mw. (n.d.). Malawi Government Information and Services - Constitution of Malawi. Article 77(2)(b). [online] Available at: <https://www.malawi.gov.mw/index.php/resources/documents/constitution-of-the-republic-of-malawi>

17 MCP Manifesto of 2004, article 6.6a

18 www.malawi.gov.mw. (n.d.). Malawi Government Information and Services - Constitution of Malawi. Section 51(e). [online] Available at: <https://www.malawi.gov.mw/index.php/resources/documents/constitution-of-the-republic-of-malawi>

19 [Constitution of Malawi](#) Section 52 & Standing Orders 32 and Appendix D

20 www.malawi.gov.mw. (n.d.). Malawi Government Information and Services - Constitution of Malawi. Section 60(1). [online] Available at: <https://www.malawi.gov.mw/index.php/resources/documents/constitution-of-the-republic-of-malawi> & [National Assembly Powers and Privileges Act 2014](#)

freedom of speech immunity, which extends beyond their term of office. There is provision for the sanction for Members who misuse this privilege, for example, by raising matters awaiting a judicial decision²¹. There is debate about the situations which would constitute misuse, for example, in the case of treason²². Standing orders also make provisions to give people a right to respond to references in the Legislature's procedures²³.

Members' Remuneration Benefits and Professional Development

There is no independent body or mechanism for setting remuneration, benefits and other entitlements for Members. There is a system for the reimbursement of parliamentary expenses, and this is allocated on a non-partisan basis. Members are provided with a daily sitting allowance (DSA). While this system is cheaper and simpler to administer than other systems, it is expensive for Parliament to extend its sitting days or offer benefits to Members, such as training courses. Development partners have, for example, not run programmes for members because of the cost of providing DSA at the total rate. This allowance limits the Parliament's capacity, efficiency and effectiveness and limits opportunities for Members. There is also a lack of transparency about the payment of DSA. Members who do not attend Parliament or are sanctioned and have allowances removed should not receive assistance, but this information is not scrutinised. The planned increase in constituencies next election will impact the institution's budget.

RECOMMENDATION 2

An independent body should be established to determine Members' salaries and benefits. That there is a review of daily sitting allowance (DSA) to give more flexibility to extend the work of the Legislature. Payment (and withholding) of DSA and other allowances should be made public on the website of the independent body and/or Parliament's website.

Interparliamentary organisations and exchanges with other Parliaments provide regular Member development. Members report that peer support is sufficient and builds confidence. For example, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK branch provides a valued new member development seminar²⁴ and the Parliament of Malawi has close links with the Parliament of Scotland.

While Members are optimistic about this support, there is debate about the best time to provide it in the parliamentary session. While new Members need help, regular engagements and targeted 'top-up' and specialist sessions might also be required for Members that have been in Parliament for longer, potentially using the benefits of technology.

The last few elections have seen a significant turnover of Members, with around 70% losing their seats. This causes a loss of institutional capability, experience and knowledge. Women are often not voted back in. While voting out their representatives is the right of the people of Malawi, there needs to be plans and systems in place to ensure the smooth and effective running of Parliament through these transitions and investment in rapid skills building after an election. The strategic plan includes a parliamentary training programme for Members²⁵.

Cognisant of the aforementioned electoral turnover, the Parliament should consider its provisions for Members that suffer defeat at the polls. Losing a seat in Parliament can be a very abrupt experience, and a time in Parliament doesn't necessarily provide an individual with reputable formal expertise that places them well to take on a new role elsewhere. Therefore, Parliament should consider what services it offers Members whilst in the chamber to prepare them should they lose their seats, not least because they could return to Parliament later in life, as many have already in Malawi.

Two ways that the Parliament could address the transition of former Members to life outside of Parliament would be via engagement with recruitment agencies and providing the opportunity to deliver valedictory speeches. In building relationships with recruitment agencies, Parliament can help them to understand the transferable skills of being a Parliamentarian, which can provide Members with a path should they suffer an electoral loss. Valedictory speeches following an electoral defeat, delivered either in the chamber or at an event designed for such presentations, allow Members to formally mark the end of their parliamentary career by reflecting on the achievements and frustrations of their time in office. Such speeches also qualify for an individual to 'reclaim the narrative' from the perception that they have been 'discarded'.

21 Standing Orders 192

22 Standing Orders 85 and 226

23 Standing Orders 79, 176 & 177

24 <https://www.uk-cpa.org/news-and-views/post-election-seminar-for-newly-elected-parliamentarians-in-malawi/>

25 Strategic Plan of the Parliament of Malawi 2021-26 – see Appendix A

“Few MPs who leave unexpectedly have plans in place to assist them to navigate the difficult transition to life after parliament. Nevertheless, a parliamentary career is most commonly a transitory career.”

Transitioning to Life after Parliament: A report commissioned by the Parliament of Victoria²⁶

Rules and procedures for Members are proportionate and fair and include principles for natural justice and removing Members. The Committee on Privileges oversees this²⁷. Evidence was that sanctions are generally imposed proportionately and reasonably.

TRANSITIONING TO LIFE AFTER PARLIAMENT: A REPORT COMMISSIONED BY THE PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

Deakin University and the Victorian Parliamentary Former Members Association conducted a unique study on the post-parliamentary lives of MPs, revealing that leaving office can be sudden and traumatic. Contrary to the belief that former MPs easily secure high-paying jobs, only 20% do so, and it can take up to 18 months to find a role that doesn't match their previous status or income.

The document is available from: <https://new.parliament.vic.gov.au/news/general-news/research-report-examines-transitioning-to-life-after-parliament/>



Infrastructure

The National Assembly Building was purpose-built by the Chinese Government and opened its doors in May 2020. It is bright and airy with a large campus. There is evidence of ongoing repair and maintenance. There is good access for the public and wheelchair users (using ramps as the lift is unreliable).

There have been some updates since the Parliament first started occupying the premises. ICT infrastructure is one example of an area that has received updates, as a Cisco-managed LAN infrastructure has been established (routers, switches, firewall), and official email services have been provided (hosted on Microsoft Exchange 2019). A bulk SMS service has been installed for sending mass text messages.

The Parliament of Malawi has limited offices for Members, inadequate offices for staff, and needs constituency offices. At a minimum, senior Members such as committee chairs should have office space. The number of committee rooms has been reduced from ten to three to provide additional offices. This has put pressure on committee sitting time and created a requirement to prioritise certain committees over others. **There are plans to pilot constituency resource offices as part of the Strategic Plan²⁸.** The main barrier to this is cost. The proposed increase in the number of Members will impact this area. However, the chamber does have the capacity for a rise in the number of Members.

²⁶ Transitioning to Life after Parliament: A report commissioned by the Parliament of Victoria

²⁷ Nethery, A., Ferguson, P., Nwokora, Z. and Clarke, M., 2021. Transitioning to Life after Parliament. Accessible from: <https://new.parliament.vic.gov.au/49e8f9/globalassets/images/news/library-papers/transitioninglifeafterparliament.pdf>

²⁸ Strategic Plan of the Parliament of Malawi 2021-26

RECOMMENDATION 3

Investment in more and better infrastructure is needed including constituency offices, resource centres, committee rooms and office space for senior Members.

“ICT is at an infant stage. It is an enabler, without it, we cannot move forward”.

Rules of Procedure

Members all have laptops and are provided with training on how to use them. The ICT Division is determined to modernise itself and the broader institution. The ICT Division was part of the Government. Becoming an ICT division of the Parliament has allowed it to focus on the specific needs of Parliament and its Members. The digitisation process has been accelerated by measures for COVID-19, such as virtual sittings and a reduction of paper documents. Significant efficiency and cost savings have been delivered as a result. For example, Hansard has become digital with ‘For the Record’ voice recognition software²⁹. However, the subscription to this software only records sittings and utilises cloud storage to save them. Whilst this is an improvement on previous facilities, it is more time-consuming than speech-to-text software, which would give Hansard a draft of the proceedings to review and finalise alongside the recording.

There are plans for electronic voting, though these have yet to come into effect, and votes are currently processed via roll call. Development partners, including UNDP, have supported digitisation. The ICT team need more software, programming skills and specialist skills such as cyber security. Members need more training to take advantage of all the ICT tools available. Barriers to offering this training are mentioned above, and the specific training that the ICT Division has identified is in Appendix C ([page 29](#)).

Hon. Speaker Catherine Gotani, MP and Deputy Speaker Aisha Adams, MP meeting with Susie Latta, consultant and Clive Barker, Programmes Manager, as part of the consultation



²⁹ <https://fortherecord.com/>

II. ORGANISATION OF THE LEGISLATURE

1. PROCEDURES AND SESSIONS

Rules of Procedure

The Standing Orders of the Parliament are clear, simple and up-to-date³⁰, and they reflect the practice and culture of the organisation. The rules are not currently available online, pending the launch of the new website. This should be remedied as a matter of urgency. The rules of procedure allow for raising points of order, which is followed in practice³¹. The ICT Division has established a file-sharing service to share documents like Standing Orders with Members. However, as staff in the Division have yet to receive training on its use, it is rarely utilised.

The rules of procedure can only be amended or adopted by a vote of the Legislature³². Changes to the rules only need a simple majority to change the rules³³. This rule should be changed to at least a two-thirds majority, but the best practice is to aim for a consensus of party groups and near unanimity.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Amendments of the Standing Orders should require at least a two-thirds majority and, as far as possible, cross-party consensus.

Presiding Officers

The Speaker and Deputy Speakers are elected, and the rules are detailed in the Constitution and Standing Orders. These are followed in practice³⁴. While Members can be a bit unruly, the Speaker maintains order to allow for robust debate and the participation of all Members. The Speakers, advised by Clerks of the Table, decide questions of procedure in line with practice and precedent. They also look to other Parliaments, such as Zambia and South Africa, for advice and their precedent in complex situations.

Presiding officers have sanctions for inappropriate behaviour during proceedings³⁵, which are used when necessary to maintain order³⁶. Members can be removed from the chamber and suspended for future sitting days. When suspended, they do not receive their daily sitting allowance.

Convening Sessions and Setting the Agenda

The National Assembly sits for approximately 17-18 weeks a year and must sit for at least two sessions yearly. Members and other stakeholders, such as civil society groups, feel that legislation needs more time for debate. One of the barriers to extra sittings is cost and DSA (see [Recommendation 2](#)).

30 National Assembly Standing Orders as Amended 2020

31 Standing Orders 96

32 www.malawi.gov.mw. (n.d.). Malawi Government Information and Services - Constitution of Malawi. Section 56(1). [online] Available at: <https://www.malawi.gov.mw/index.php/resources/documents/constitution-of-the-republic-of-malawi> & Standing Orders 211 and 159d

33 Standing Orders 211 (2)

34 www.malawi.gov.mw. (n.d.). Malawi Government Information and Services - Constitution of Malawi. Section 53. [online] Available at: <https://www.malawi.gov.mw/index.php/resources/documents/constitution-of-the-republic-of-malawi> & Standing Orders Part VIII

35 Standing Orders 105-107

36 www.nyasatimes.com. (2020). Speaker kicks out Mchacha, Chikwanje for causing disorder in Parliament - Malawi Nyasa Times - News from Malawi about Malawi. [online] Available at: <https://www.nyasatimes.com/speaker-kicks-out-mchacha-chikwanje-for-causing-disorder-in-parliament/>

The Constitution states that every session of the National Assembly is decided by the Speaker “in consultation with the President”³⁷. Previously a President has refused to agree to a sitting³⁸. The Legislature should be able to call itself regularly and, in extraordinary circumstances, into session. The President can convene a special legislative session and prorogue Parliament in consultation with the Speaker³⁹ (see [Recommendation 11](#)).

The agenda is set by the cross-party Business Committee, chaired by the Speaker, representing all parties with more than ten seats. The agenda is then presented to the House for agreement, where further amendments can be voted on⁴⁰.

There is currently no published parliamentary or legislative calendar. However, there is an internal calendar. More information on the annual calendar or parliamentary events, such as the State of the Nation Address, the budget and recess dates, should be available for the public for transparency and planning. We understand that details of forthcoming parliamentary business, including plenary and committee sittings, will be included in the new website.

The Parliament of Malawi should be commended for the time it makes available for non-government Member business (every Thursday). Backbench Members appreciate this. An impressive number of private members’ bills have been passed in recent parliaments.

Debate and Voting

The rules for structuring debates and deciding the precedence of motions are clear in Standing Orders, and these are consistently applied⁴¹. These rules are followed by the Business Committee when setting the agenda. The time for debating legislation is sometimes curtailed in the interests of urgency⁴². There should be at least 28 days from a bill appearing in the Gazette to being tabled in the House. This convention can be reduced to seven days when urgent, but it is reported that it is often two days or fewer. This does not give time for Members to prepare and debate the issues and will lead to weaker legislation. Stakeholders such as the media and civil society groups also say they cannot respond within these timescales.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Requests for time waivers, reducing the 28 days between the Bill appearing in the Gazette and being tabled in the House, should only be granted in extreme circumstances.

All proceedings and votes of the Legislature are held in public unless private sittings are necessary⁴³. Media members understand the need for private sittings, but the reasons could be clearer, and there is only sometimes notice.

Only Members of the National Assembly can vote on issues before the Legislature⁴⁴, and votes are recorded in Hansard. Members in a minority can demand a recorded vote⁴⁵. There are plans to move to electronic voting for speed and efficiency, driven by the Speaker and other senior figures in the Parliament, but results will remain public.

Petitions

There is a public petitions system, and the Parliament hears them⁴⁶. Members and the public need clarity about the process, although support and guidance are provided by staff. Without a website, there is no way to submit electronic petitions or see the process. **Parliament could consider online petitions to attract the public, particularly youth involvement**⁴⁷.

37 www.malawi.gov.mw. (n.d.). Malawi Government Information and Services - Constitution of Malawi. Section 59(1). [online] Available at: <https://www.malawi.gov.mw/index.php/resources/documents/constitution-of-the-republic-of-malawi> & Standing Orders Part III

38 VOA. (n.d.). Malawi’s President Mutharika Refuses Parliament Sitting Over Impeachment. [online] Available at: <https://www.voanews.com/a/a-13-2008-02-20-voa1/334444.html>

39 www.malawi.gov.mw. (n.d.). Malawi Government Information and Services - Constitution of Malawi. Section 59(1)(a). [online] Available at: <https://www.malawi.gov.mw/index.php/resources/documents/constitution-of-the-republic-of-malawi> & Standing Orders Part III

40 Standing Orders Part XIV

41 Standing Orders Part XIV particularly 47

42 Standing Orders Part XXIII

43 www.malawi.gov.mw. (n.d.). Malawi Government Information and Services - Constitution of Malawi. Section 56(5). [online] Available at: <https://www.malawi.gov.mw/index.php/resources/documents/constitution-of-the-republic-of-malawi>

44 www.malawi.gov.mw. (n.d.). Malawi Government Information and Services - Constitution of Malawi. Section 48. [online] Available at: <https://www.malawi.gov.mw/index.php/resources/documents/constitution-of-the-republic-of-malawi>

45 Standing Orders 109

46 Standing Orders Part XVI

47 Ourcommons.ca. (2019). Home - Petitions. [online] Available at: <https://petitions.ourcommons.ca/en/Home/Index>

Records

The Legislature maintains a record of proceedings in Hansard. This is up to date, with a target of 48 hours for each document to be produced. Documents are not currently available online, with there being no website. This should be remedied as a high priority (see [Recommendation 18](#)). The process for producing Hansard has recently been digitalised, which has sped up production, and other related ICT improvements are planned. The Hansard team are keen to learn and improve. They work closely with colleagues in other Parliaments and have benefitted from peer-to-peer learning.

2. COMMITTEES

The Legislature has the right to form committees. Committees have become stronger over recent years. They sit more regularly, and Chairs and Members have gained further skills in scrutiny. They have attracted more public and media interest because of the quality of the hearings and reports. They initiate inquiries on issues of national importance. Some committees have a constitutional mandate: the Public Appointments Committee, Budget Committee and Legal Affairs Committee and Defence and Security Committee⁴⁸. These are all chaired by opposition Members and are particularly strong, well-supported and respected.

‘Committees are good at getting to the bottom of things’
‘Committees are a good source of accurate information’

Membership of committees reflects the political composition of the Legislature and is decided by party Whips⁴⁹, with Members expressing a preference. Chairs and deputy chairs are elected from the committee membership⁵⁰. Meetings are held in public by default and only closed if sufficient reasoning is provided⁵¹. Only committee Members can vote⁵², and those votes are minuted and published with reports⁵³.

Reports are of a high standard and available to the public, but more use could be made to increase the likelihood of adopting the recommendations. The Parliament should take a comprehensive strategy of follow-up to pursue the implementation of recommendations. The Legislature should request periodic updates from the government on how it addresses the issues raised. These updates should be made public and, ideally, reported in the media, encouraging the government to act. This would allow Parliament to, in turn, review such updates and provide feedback, constructively collaborating on the issues at hand.

Powers and Resources

Committees can summon persons, records and papers⁵⁴; these powers are regularly used. Committees hear evidence from witnesses and take public submissions⁵⁵. There are some legal protections for whistle-blowers⁵⁶ but no specific parliamentary protections.

Legislation is referred to committees for scrutiny, but this is optional, and there is limited committee capacity to handle the whole volume of legislative scrutiny and oversight. Committees have the power to recommend amendments to draft bills⁵⁷.

Each committee has a clerk as well as research and legal support⁵⁸. Members and staff praised this level of support, but more resources would allow committees to do more and be more effective. Currently, the researchers provided to a committee are pulled towards the relevant Chair, who can utilise them for assistance in non-committee matters due to an overall lack of support for Members. One area for improvement in committee resourcing is resources to employ expert and specialist advisors.

Committees need to sit for longer. Sitting times are limited to a minimum of one week in every quarter. Any additional legislative scrutiny displaces other hearings, and committees cannot inquire into emerging and urgent issues. The restrictions on increased

48 www.malawi.gov.mw. (n.d.). Malawi Government Information and Services - Constitution of Malawi. Section 56(7)(8). [online] Available at: <https://www.malawi.gov.mw/index.php/resources/documents/constitution-of-the-republic-of-malawi> & 162 Standing Orders Part XXVI

49 www.malawi.gov.mw. (n.d.). Malawi Government Information and Services - Constitution of Malawi. Section 56(8a). [online] Available at: <https://www.malawi.gov.mw/index.php/resources/documents/constitution-of-the-republic-of-malawi> & Standing Orders 152

50 Standing Orders 171

51 Standing Orders 170

52 Standing Orders 169

53 Standing Orders 173 & 178

54 www.malawi.gov.mw. (n.d.). Malawi Government Information and Services - Constitution of Malawi. Section 60(3). [online] Available at: <https://www.malawi.gov.mw/index.php/resources/documents/constitution-of-the-republic-of-malawi>, [National Assembly Powers and Privileges Act 2014](#) & Standing Orders 151

55 Standing Orders 176 & 177

56 [Corrupt Practices Act](#) 51A

57 www.malawi.gov.mw. (n.d.). Malawi Government Information and Services - Constitution of Malawi. Section 56(7). [online] Available at: <https://www.malawi.gov.mw/index.php/resources/documents/constitution-of-the-republic-of-malawi> & Standing Orders 127 (4)

58 Standing Orders 183

committee meetings are room availability, limits on staff and additional Member DSA costs. Any other sittings need further central funding. This sometimes means the Parliament goes to the Executive to ask for this funding, which is declined as there is no incentive for Government to fund further scrutiny. Committees can sit when the National Assembly is not in session⁵⁹, which could help overcome space restraints, although not costs issues.

RECOMMENDATION 6

Committee capacity should be increased to allow more sitting times, staffing (particularly expert advisors), and Chairs' and Members' skills. Closer follow-up is needed on reports and the response from the Executive.

Sometimes two or three committees sit together to discuss cross-cutting issues. For example, the Agriculture and Gender Committees sat together to examine issues facing women farmers, who comprise 80% of all subsistence farmers. This joint approach by committees is good practice and was praised by Members, staff, the Executive and external stakeholders as an effective and efficient way to undertake relevant inquiries and make the best use of resources. Committees also undertake field visits which Members, staff and stakeholders all find valuable.

There are issues around some committee Members' attendance and achieving the quorum of 50%+1, meaning votes sometimes need to be postponed. There has been investment in committee skills, with partners including AFIDEP and USAID/ Democracy International, which is ongoing⁶⁰. Chairs, Members and staff valued this support and felt the work of committees had benefited, but all felt that extra training and capacity building was still needed.

The Public Accounts Committee has no constitutional mandate, although it is provided for in law⁶¹. As part of this Assessment, speaking with the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee or the Auditor General was not possible. Still, it was reported that membership changes and backlog at the National Audit Office had limited the committee's work. The Public Accounts Committee is a vital scrutiny committee of the Legislature and should be quickly established and fully supported to do its work.

RECOMMENDATION 7

The Public Accounts Committee needs to be at full strength and capacity as soon as possible. This is a high priority.

3. POLITICAL PARTIES, PARTY GROUPS, CROSS-PARTY GROUPS, AND THE OPPOSITION

The right to form a political party is protected in the Constitution⁶², and it is relatively easy to do so. There are restrictions on parties with a religious mandate or name⁶³. There is public funding of political parties provided for in the Constitution⁶⁴. The Political Parties Act 2018⁶⁵ is yet to be implemented and enforced. More transparency and accountability on political and campaign funding is needed, with the main parties leading by example (see [Recommendation 1](#)).

There are no rules and some confusion about party and cross-party groups. There is provision for electing and funding for the Leader of the Opposition⁶⁶. The Parliament's priority is to focus limited resources on core functions. There are rules, budget and staffing support for the Women's Caucus, which is thriving and active⁶⁷. Other caucuses were mentioned but are transitory as they do not receive assistance. There are benefits to cross-party groups and the rules, processes and resources. Dedicated to supporting these groups should be reviewed. With a young population⁶⁸, the Parliament would benefit from a youth caucus, which could build on the success of and support given to the Malawi Youth Parliament.

59 Standing Orders 173 (3)

60 kratos (2019). Strengthening Malawi Parliament Committees: Performance evaluation with Committee Chairs. [online] African Institute for Development Policy - AFIDEP. Available at: <https://www.afidep.org/strengthening-malawi-parliament-committees-performance-evaluation-with-committee-chairs/>

61 Public Audit Act 2003

62 www.malawi.gov.mw. (n.d.). Malawi Government Information and Services - Constitution of Malawi. Section 40. [online] Available at: <https://www.malawi.gov.mw/index.php/resources/documents/constitution-of-the-republic-of-malawi>

63 Political Parties (Registration and Regulation) Act 2017 7

64 www.malawi.gov.mw. (n.d.). Malawi Government Information and Services - Constitution of Malawi. Section 40(2). [online] Available at: <https://www.malawi.gov.mw/index.php/resources/documents/constitution-of-the-republic-of-malawi>

65 Political Parties Act 2018

66 Standing Orders 35

67 <https://pwcmalawi.org> Standing Orders 202

68 PopulationPyramid.net. (n.d.). Population Pyramids of the World from 1950 to 2100. [online] Available at: <https://www.populationpyramid.net/malawi/2021/>

RECOMMENDATION 8

Parliament considers the rules and resources for cross-party groups and caucuses, and considers providing support for a youth caucus.

4. PARLIAMENTARY STAFF

The Constitution and legislation provide an impartial and non-partisan staff⁶⁹, and the Parliament has a small, hardworking team of clerks and administrative staff. The requirement to be non-partisan is clear to staff, and they gave good examples of how boundaries work in practice. The number and capacity of staff have increased. There is evidence that the Parliament has become more professional and effective since the launch of the current Strategic Plan in 2021.

The Parliamentary Service Act⁷⁰ provides for a parliamentary service which is non-partisan and independent of the Executive and Judiciary. The act also provides the legal basis for the Parliamentary Service Commission, which controls the parliamentary service, including determining terms of employment and recruitment of the Clerk and other senior officers and a code of conduct for staff.

Representation, Recruitment, Promotion and Management

Staff and Members felt they needed more research, library and ICT facilities. Office space is limited. While creative and determined, research staff felt their services were stretched too thinly, with just six staff to support all Members (and Members need staff or researchers.) Specialist staff, expert advice, such as legal and financial/economic analysis, and ICT staff (such as cyber security) were particularly needed. While the Legislature has power over the Parliamentary Service, it has little independence over its budget, which can restrict the total funding available. There is also an indication that the Executive chooses what aspects of the Parliamentary budget it funds. It could, for example, refuse extra staffing funding. Staff have benefited from and value peer-to-peer learning and capacity building.

There was no indication of direct discrimination in recruitment based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, or disability. Still, there was a suggestion that some jobs went to well-connected people. It is hard to verify rumours such as these, but transparency about procedures helps build confidence in the processes for recruitment and promotion.

The Parliament has a female Speaker, Deputy Speaker and Clerk, so there is strong female representation in the Legislature's political and administrative leadership. Several senior women Ministers and women also lead the civil service, the police and some of the independent constitutional bodies. But while the Executive has a 50/50 women's representation target, we could see no explicit commitment from the Legislature. There is, for example, nothing in the Strategic Plan.

RECOMMENDATION 9

There should be transparent and objective recruitment and promotion procedures to prevent discrimination and ensure progression is on the grounds of merit. Specific measures should be taken to ensure that women and other minority groups are supported to achieve equal and proportional representation. There needs to be more investment in the recruitment and training of staff particularly in specialist areas and ICT.

69 www.malawi.gov.mw. (n.d.). Malawi Government Information and Services - Constitution of Malawi. Section 55. [online] Available at: <https://www.malawi.gov.mw/index.php/resources/documents/constitution-of-the-republic-of-malawi>

70 Parliamentary Service Act

III. FUNCTIONS OF THE LEGISLATURE

5. LEGISLATIVE FUNCTION

“With Parliament, there is no school so everything is learnt on the job.”

The approval of the Legislature is required for the passage of all legislation, including budgets, and the Legislature has the power to enact resolutions and other expressions of its will⁷¹. There is a provision for delegating legislative powers to the Judiciary or Executive and the power to scrutinise this delegated legislation. Still, in practice, there needs to be more capacity⁷².

Legislative Process

Legislation is currently drafted by the Executive and then reviewed by the Legislature. Parliament has some legislative drafting capacity and expertise to review legislation and for the drafting of private members’ bills, but there is a need for more knowledge and skills. There is a 28-day period between Parliament receiving the bill and its first reading. It is often requested that this standing order is waived on the grounds of urgency and the timings reduced to the seven-day minimum. There is no formal equality impact assessment process in the development of legislation. There is often involvement and consultation of stakeholders, but if legislation is rushed through, there will be limited time to debate the bill and assess its impact.

The Parliament compares well to others regarding the quantity of legislation⁷³. Still, the quality of legislation can improve if there is more time for discussion before the bill is passed. As mentioned in this report, frequent waivers reduce the time for Members to understand the policy area of the bill and debate and scrutiny in plenary and committee sessions. There is evidence that this can lead to an adversarial, party-political approach rather than constructive debate and amendments on much-needed legislation (see [Recommendation 5](#)).

The Legislature has interest and desire but needs processes or resources to deliver post-legislative scrutiny. This could be an area for future engagement with other parliaments to understand how post-legislative scrutiny can be undertaken. Civil society organisations, for example, can also play a role in this, as with the Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG)⁷⁴ in South Africa. Similar work is already undertaken in analysing the budgets of the Parliament debates and monitoring public spending by the Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN)⁷⁵.

RECOMMENDATION 10

A process for post-legislative scrutiny should be considered by consulting with other parliaments and NGOs for examples of good practice and what is simple, efficient and effective.

The budget of the Legislature is set by the Parliamentary Service Commission and voted on by the House. It then needs to be submitted to the Treasury, and then there are negotiations and reductions. There were attempts to amend the law with the Parliamentary Service Act to state that 1.1% of the national budget would be spent on Parliament. However, this brought constitutional challenges as only the Executive can bring money bills. The Executive did not support this change.

RECOMMENDATION 11

Parliament needs the power to set its own budget. It should also have the power to call itself into regular or extraordinary sitting, and to prorogue Parliament without agreement from the President.

71 www.malawi.gov.mw. (n.d.). Malawi Government Information and Services - Constitution of Malawi. Sections 8 & 66. [online] Available at: <https://www.malawi.gov.mw/index.php/resources/documents/constitution-of-the-republic-of-malawi>

72 [Constitution of Malawi](#) Section 58 Standing Orders 159e

73 Strategic Plan of the Parliament of Malawi 2021-26

74 pmg.org.za. (n.d.). Parliamentary Monitoring Group | South Africa. [online] Available at: <https://pmg.org.za/>

75 Malawi Economic Justice Network. (n.d.). Projects. [online] Available at: <https://www.mejn.mw/category/projects/>

The Public and Legislation

There are opportunities for the public to input into legislation and committee business; the Constitution mandates this⁷⁶. There are public consultations and stakeholder involvement in the work of the Legislature, but there is room for improvement. In principle, the public should have timely information on legislation under consideration. In practice, it is hard for the public to get information on the progress of bills. The Executive has a legislative calendar, but it is not made public. With a website, it is easier for the public to get copies of draft bills. Getting legislation under consideration on the new website should be a high priority (see [Recommendation 18](#)). Stakeholders said there were delays to legislation being presented to the House. For example, the Food and Nutrition Bill has been discussed with Government since 2014, but it is yet to be tabled. The Legislature should make representations to the Government on the progress of bills if these are seen to be in the public interest.

6. OVERSIGHT FUNCTION

To aid the oversight function, the Executive provide timely responses to oral and written questions and Parliamentary reports, but this only happens sometimes. The relationship between the Executive and the Legislature is a strained one. There were complaints that information came late from the Executive. The Executive complained that it gets unreasonable, last-minute demands from Parliament. The Executive says it does not receive committee reports, and the Legislature complains it gets unreasonable, last-minute requests from Parliament. The Executive says it does not receive committee reports, and the Legislature complains it does not get government responses to committee reports. Better communications processes would aid the effectiveness of Parliament and the Government. An improved method for more coordinated responses, particularly regarding committee reports, including follow-up to see if recommendations are implemented, would increase the effectiveness of the committee oversight function.

The questioning style of some Members was challenged. While recognising the value and need for scrutiny, questioning must be respectful. Civil servants asked that Members be mindful that both the Executive and Legislature are working in the interests of the people of Malawi and that some approaches can feel like bullying.

The Legislature has powers to oversee the military and security services in the Constitution and Standing Orders⁷⁷. The Defence and Security Committee has this oversight authority. This happens in practice, although there are challenges around confidential material. Sometimes this is presented in a private meeting with the Chair.

The Legislature has powers to oversee state-owned enterprises. These are reviewed by the Public Accounts Committee and the portfolio/ departmental committees⁷⁸. There are issues with the National Audit Office's capacity to audit these enterprises; some audits are contracted out. This brings challenges with some commercial auditors not understanding the specialist requirements of public finance management.

There are limited powers for the Legislature to oversee the President's international treaty powers and the country's progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals⁷⁹. An example of an international treaty would be the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture. Ratification of international treaties is a specialist, thematic area that the CPA could support as they retain many examples of good practice from other Parliaments and have recently delivered technical assistance to the National Assembly of Zambia.

RECOMMENDATION 12

Parliament needs to look at ways of scrutinising international treaties and particularly progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

Oversight of Independent Constitutional Bodies

Independent constitutional offices include an Ombudsman, Human Rights Commission and Electoral Commission. The Public Appointments Committee appoints the Ombudsman, whom report annually to the National Assembly⁸⁰. Their mandate is to investigate administrative injustice and unfair treatment. Citizens regularly seek assistance, but they need more resources despite budgets being increased substantially by the Treasury.

76 www.malawi.gov.mw. (n.d.). Malawi Government Information and Services - Constitution of Malawi. Section 96(2). [online] Available at: <https://www.malawi.gov.mw/index.php/resources/documents/constitution-of-the-republic-of-malawi>

77 [Constitution of Malawi](#) 162 Standing Orders 160

78 Standing Orders 161 & 166 1b Public Audit Act 2003

79 www.malawi.gov.mw. (n.d.). Malawi Government Information and Services - Constitution of Malawi. Section 211. [online] Available at: <https://www.malawi.gov.mw/index.php/resources/documents/constitution-of-the-republic-of-malawi>

80 [Constitution of Malawi](#) Chapter 10

The Malawi Human Rights Commission (MHRC) comprises the Ombudsman, Law Commissioner and other commissioners appointed by the President. The Public Appointments Committee oversees the appointments. The primary functions of the Commission are the protection and investigation of violations of constitutional or other legal rights⁸¹. There is a requirement for the MHRC to report to Parliament⁸².

The Legal Affairs Committee oversees the work of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Anti-corruption Bureau, the Office of the Ombudsman, the Law Commission, the Human Rights Commission, the Inspectorate of Prisons, the Electoral Commission, the Office of Administrator General, the Office of the Registrar General, the Financial Intelligence Authority and the Judiciary⁸³. The Legislature needs to follow up more consistently on findings from the reports and issues presented. Despite increased funding from the current Government, the independent constitutional bodies have limited resources and need more independent funding to perform their function fully and independently.

RECOMMENDATION 13

Parliament needs to advocate for increased resources for independent constitutional bodies. There needs to be consistency in following up on issues presented to Parliament by those bodies.

Financial and Budget Oversight

The financial and budget oversight procedures are specified in the rules of procedure, the Constitution and legislation⁸⁴. The Legislature receives the draft annual budget estimates and supplementary estimates as required⁸⁵. Fourteen days are provided for debate of the budget. While this time is dedicated to debate and Members from all parties are provided with opportunities to oversee the budget, there needs to be more meaningful scrutiny in practice⁸⁶. One of the challenges is a need for more financial understanding by Members. The new Parliamentary Budget Office in the Parliament should help provide support and analysis.

RECOMMENDATION 14

Members need more support with the analysis of the budget and financial issues. The Parliamentary Budget Office should be fully resourced as a high priority and Members should receive capacity development on financial and budgetary oversight.

The Executive is required to provide financial reports to the Auditor General and annual reports to the Legislature⁸⁷. There are delays in auditing financial statements at the National Audit Office, delaying financial scrutiny by the Legislature.

There is a National Audit Office, but the Auditor General is a Government appointment, which Parliament's Public Appointments Committee confirms. The supreme audit institution should be independent of Government, and the Auditor General should be an appointment of the Parliament⁸⁸. For example, in South Africa, the President appoints the Auditor General on the recommendation of the National Assembly⁸⁹. There is an acting Auditor General that has been for a while. There have been clarifications to the legislation and the recruitment process, which means a substantive Auditor General can now be recruited.

RECOMMENDATION 15

The Auditor General should be a Parliamentary appointment.

81 [Constitution of Malawi](#) Chapter 11

82 Human Rights Commission Act

83 Standing orders 159 c

84 www.malawi.gov.mw. (n.d.). Malawi Government Information and Services - Constitution of Malawi. Section 91(3)(4). [online] Available at: <https://www.malawi.gov.mw/index.php/resources/documents/constitution-of-the-republic-of-malawi> and 96 1d, Public Financial Management Act Part IV

85 Standing Orders part XXV

86 Standing Orders 138 (3)

87 Public Financial Management Act Part IX

88 <https://www.uk-cpa.org/media/3686/capac-handbook-240820.pdf>

89 Constitution of South Africa Section 193

All reports of the Supreme or National Audit Office are referred to the Public Accounts Committee⁹⁰. Still, disruption at the National Audit Office and the Public Accounts Committee, with changes to membership, have led to delays in scrutinising public expenditure. This should be resolved urgently (see [Recommendation 7](#)).

No Confidence and Impeachment

The Legislature has the powers and mechanisms to impeach or censure the Executive or express no-confidence in the government⁹¹.

7. REPRESENTATIONAL FUNCTION

Members of the National Assembly need more resources to fulfil their representative function. They have computers and some research support, but most do not have an office in Parliament, and none have offices in their constituency. There are plans to trial parliament-owned and run constituency resource centres in some constituencies as part of the Strategic Plan to give the Legislature a presence in constituencies and allow Members a space to meet constituents and deal with casework.

“MPs are welfare providers as well as lawmakers”

The expectations of the public towards their representatives are high. It is common for people to expect Members to use their resources to pay for local services or assist citizens with funeral expenses. Some Members promise to do this during election campaigns to secure their seats. It is essential to raise awareness about the role of elected representatives. Members set rules to prevent direct payments or gifts to constituents, which could lead to corruption. In addition, Members should have the necessary skills to advocate for better local services and improve service delivery for their constituents.

There is an ongoing discussion in Malawi regarding local governance. Local councils have been established to decentralise the government and enhance local service delivery. Members are part of these councils in their constituencies and are involved in allocating Constituency Development Funds. Members contribute their local knowledge and expertise and coordinate national and local expenditures to improve service delivery in their constituency. However, Members having voting positions on local councils create conflicts of interest and need more accountability, blurring the lines between the Executive (local and national) and the Legislature. While Members are accountable nationally for using Constituency Development Funds, local councillors are responsible for local expenditure and service delivery. While coordination and consultation between national and local representatives are crucial, and they must remain informed about each other's work, it is vital to have clear boundaries and lines of accountability to avoid confusion or conflict. In addition, Members' presence on local councils restricts their sitting time as they cannot sit when Parliament is sitting, as Members need to be present to vote.

RECOMMENDATION 16

There should be better awareness about the role of MPs. There should be rules banning direct payments or gifts to constituents. MPs should have the necessary skills to advocate for better local services for their constituents. There should be cooperation with local councillors. MPs should not have a vote on local councils.

Representation of Women

Currently, women's representation in Parliament is 22%, and in the Cabinet, it is 33%⁹². A solid female Speaker, Deputy Speaker and Clerk lead the National Assembly. Women also hold senior positions across the government and broader society, including Secretary and Deputy Secretary to the President, the Ombudsman⁹³, the Chairperson of the MHRC and a majority of its commissioners⁹⁴ and the Inspector General of Police⁹⁵. While women in Malawi have equal rights, there are still social and economic barriers to women being fully equal.

90 www.malawi.gov.mw. (n.d.). Malawi Government Information and Services - Constitution of Malawi. Section 184 and Standing Orders 161. [online] Available at: <https://www.malawi.gov.mw/index.php/resources/documents/constitution-of-the-republic-of-malawi> and Standing Orders 161

91 [Constitution of Malawi](#) Section 66, Standing Orders 207 & 208

92 <https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/infographics/2023-03/women-in-politics-2023>

93 www.ombudsmanmalawi.org. (n.d.). Leadership | Office of the Ombudsman. [online] Available at: <https://www.ombudsmanmalawi.org/about-us/leadership>

94 www.mhrcmw.org. (n.d.). Commissioners | Malawi Human Rights Commission. [online] Available at: <http://www.mhrcmw.org/who-we-are/commissioners/current-members>

95 www.police.gov.mw. (n.d.). Inspector Generals | Malawi Police Service. [online] Available at: <https://www.police.gov.mw/about-us/inspector-generals>

The Assembly is committed to substantially increasing women's representation and investing time and resources. As mentioned, the Legislature supports a strong, cross-party Women's Caucus. It works on issues facing women Members and the rights of women citizens more generally. One of the challenges to increasing women's representation is the low number of women Members getting re-elected. One of the Assembly's campaigns is to raise the profile of women Members in their constituencies and highlight the benefits that these Members have brought. Increasing women's representation could be something that Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) and the CPA could assist with, and the Parliament may wish to consider a Gender Sensitive Audit to identify further opportunities for development⁹⁶.

There were reports of unparliamentary and sexist language being used towards women Members in the chamber by some of their male peers. Evidence showed that the Presiding Officer robustly dealt with this, but comments were not always overheard or reported. A code of conduct for Members (see [Recommendation 19](#)) should include standards of respectful behaviour, transparent processes for reporting and sanctions for breaches.

8. PARLIAMENTARY ASSISTANCE, NETWORKING AND DIPLOMACY

Malawi has close relationships with many Parliaments, including its neighbours Zambia and Tanzania, as well as Namibia, Botswana, Kenya and South Africa. There are historically close links between the UK and Scottish Parliaments. Cooperation agreements have been signed with the Chinese and Turkish Parliaments. Malawi actively contributes to many international organisations, including CPA (the Speaker is the Chairperson of the CPA Africa Region), the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the African Union and the South African Development Community (SADC).

The Parliament works with development partners to support the delivery of the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan. There is a forum to coordinate all work by development partners, including USAID, the EU, UN agencies including UNDP and UN Women, AFIDEP, Democracy International, Global Partners Governance, National Democracy Institute and Oxfam. Funding from the Chinese Government comes through the Malawi Ministry for Finance and has included the recent renovations of the Parliament Building.

Many Members and staff benefit from the exchange of learning and experiences between parliaments and international organisations⁹⁷. There should be transparency about the development and technical assistance received and who helps to ensure that it is spread out as much as possible, supporting new individuals each time activities occur.



96 https://issuu.com/theparliamentarian/docs/cwp_gender_sensitizing_guidelines

97 www.uk-cpa.org. (n.d.). CP4D Malawi - Strengthening Committee Scrutiny. [online] Available at: <https://www.uk-cpa.org/news-and-views/cp4d-malawi-strengthening-committee-scrutiny/>

IV. VALUES OF THE LEGISLATURE

9. ACCESSIBILITY, OPENNESS AND ENGAGEMENT

Citizens and the Media

The Constitution requires Parliament to be open to citizens and the media⁹⁸. The Legislature's building is open and has a sizable public/press gallery. In practice, very few members of the public visit the Parliament as there are economic barriers and most people live in rural areas a long way from the capital.

The Parliament's purpose-built premises are accessible to wheelchair users via steep ramps. There are lifts in all spaces, but they are not reliable or trusted. There was no evidence of other adaptations, such as hearing loops.

The media was content with their access to the proceedings of Parliament. There is an active Parliamentary Press Gallery, but journalists would like more briefings and access to Members to get updates. Media members praised the strengthened committees and recent hearings, which they found relevant and uncovered important information. One challenge is the understanding of parliamentary terminology, particularly for new journalists. This could be addressed by providing a glossary and adding a definitions section to critical documents. Development partners have provided recent training courses for parliamentary journalists.

There is a non-partisan press relations office which provides support to the media. They were critical of the short timescales between releasing information about parliamentary business, which gave them little time to prepare. The website is vital for up-to-date information for the media (see [Recommendation 18](#)).

During observed sittings, the media needed to lay cabling around the building, suggesting that infrastructure investment is required to support parliamentary broadcasting. Alternatively, a single, official live stream of sessions, with the right to rebroadcast, could be provided by the Parliament to reduce the number of cameras and cables needed in the chamber and could mean that more media outlets cover the work of Parliament.

There is Parliament TV and a Facebook page where sessions are broadcast live with some introduction and explanation⁹⁹. This gets a decent number of views (FB 3.1k the day after the budget speech), although, from comments, many seem to be outside Malawi. Only 10% of citizens in Malawi have access to the internet¹⁰⁰. There are approx. 750,000k Facebook accounts (3.8% of the country) and a few on other social media platforms (4.1% of the country). There are about 10 million mobile phone connections (one for every two people, although people might have more than one connection)¹⁰¹, and WhatsApp is a popular channel for communication. The Parliament has a licence for radio coverage of proceedings, and it is hoped that this will be rolled out soon (about 95% of citizens listen to the radio).

The Parliament is improving its physical outreach to citizens and considering proposals for a 'Parliament Week'¹⁰² or 'Taking Parliament to the People'¹⁰³ style events. Increasing engagement and finding appropriate ways to reach out to citizens should be a priority and is something Parliament requires improvement on. The CPA Handbook for Engagement and Outreach¹⁰⁴ can provide some ideas and examples of good practices to increase openness and accessibility. The Parliament should consider identifying partners such as civil society organisations to extend the reach of any work undertaken. Work is needed to provide information to the public on the role of Members. This could fit into broad civic education about the Constitution and their rights, the role of the President, Executive, Judiciary and Legislature (and Members) and local councils.

No policies or procedures target promoting the work of Parliament to under-represented groups beyond the work of the Women's Caucus, previously mentioned. Malawi is a young country, with 42% of the population under 14 and 76% under 24¹⁰⁵. Youth engagement and representation should be a high priority, and the Youth Caucus (see [Recommendation 8](#)) would help with this. The strategic plan is silent on these under-represented groups, and more efforts should be made to address this matter. Again, working with civil society partners on this would amplify the institution's work.

98 www.malawi.gov.mw. (n.d.). Malawi Government Information and Services - Constitution of Malawi. Section 56(5). [online] Available at: <https://www.malawi.gov.mw/index.php/resources/documents/constitution-of-the-republic-of-malawi>

99 <https://www.facebook.com/ParliamentOfMalawi> & <https://www.businessmalawi.com/how-to-watch-parliament-of-malawi-live-online/>

100 data.worldbank.org. (n.d.). Individuals using the Internet (% of population) - Malawi | Data. [online] Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS?locations=MW>

101 DataReportal – Global Digital Insights. (n.d.). Digital 2022: Malawi. [online] Available at: <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-malawi>

102 <https://www.ukparliamentweek.org/en/>

103 Parliament.gov.za. (2022). Taking Parliament to the People 2022 - Parliament of South Africa. [online] Available at: <https://www.parliament.gov.za/project-event-details/2688>

104 https://www.cpahq.org/media/sbif14kt/engagement_education_outreach-handbook_final.pdf

105 United Nations Population Fund. (n.d.). World Population Dashboard -Malawi. [online] Available at: <https://www.unfpa.org/data/world-population/MW>

RECOMMENDATION 17

Working with partners, the Legislature should develop programmes to increase engagement, promote public understanding of its work and encourage wider civic education.

ENGAGEMENT, EDUCATION AND OUTREACH HANDBOOK FOR COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTS

The Engagement, Education and Outreach Handbook: Creating Open, Accountable and Transparent Institutions has been developed for the benefit of the CPA's 180 Parliaments and Legislatures and is designed to be a practical resource to strengthen their public engagement and outreach focus.

Readers are encouraged to access the Toolkit to obtain a guide on how parliament can enhance their engagement with the public. The document is available from: https://www.cpahq.org/news/2021_6-engagement-education-and-outreach-handbook-for-parliaments/



The Parliament currently needs a website. It was taken down after a series of hacks. A new website has been designed using guidelines from the Inter-Parliamentary Union and with support from UNDP. It is currently being populated with content, and views of the test site looked positive. There are plans for updating and maintaining the site to keep it relevant.

RECOMMENDATION 18

Getting the website live should be a very high priority for the Parliament. Information about the work and business of the National Assembly should be available without delay.

The Legislature's proceedings are in English, and Members and staff must be fluent. There is no requirement to translate or interpret proceedings into Chewa or other Malawian languages, but some resources are in different languages and an accessible format, such as radio broadcasts.

10. ETHICAL GOVERNANCE

Transparency and Integrity

There are currently limited rules for Members on accountability, transparency, responsibility and conduct. There are rules on debate and order in the chamber in Standing Orders¹⁰⁶, and the Constitution and Standing Orders require Members to declare an interest in matters under debate¹⁰⁷, which happens in practice.

There is no code of conduct for Members governing behaviour outside of sittings. The Constitution and legislation

¹⁰⁶ Standing Orders Parts XX (Rules of Debate) and XXI (Order and Disorder)

¹⁰⁷ [Constitution of Malawi](#) 61 & Standing Orders 151 (b)

require members of the National Assembly and other public office holders and their spouses to declare certain assets within three months of an election. The Parliamentary Monitoring Committee oversees compliance with this ruling¹⁰⁸. An Office of the Director of Public Officers' Declarations is appointed by the Public Appointments Committee of Parliament, which enforces and publishes the summary asset declarations¹⁰⁹. While the current constitutional and legislative requirement is a good start, stakeholders such as the media would like more transparency about Members' interests and more regular updates. For example, there are no rules requiring public declarations of financial and other relevant interests, such as gift acceptance, and it is not clear if there is a source of advice for Members on ethical dilemmas.

RECOMMENDATION 19

A code of conduct should be agreed for all Members.

Fighting corruption is a high priority for the current Government and Parliament in Malawi. Its primary anti-corruption legislation is the Corrupt Practices Act 1996, which established the country's Anti-corruption Bureau. **Along with the political will to address the matter, there are mechanisms to prevent, detect and prosecute legislators or staff engaged in corrupt practices. Members have been successfully charged and imprisoned when such means have been exercised.** The systems, processes, and intentions are widely communicated, but the investigative bodies, despite receiving considerably increased funding, are still underfunded, overstretched and lack coordination and follow-through. Parliament must take a more substantial lead on follow-up and ensure anti-corruption recommendations are acted upon.

Freedom of Information

The Access to Information Act of 2016 requires that public institutions provide information when requested by members of the public within 60 working days. The Human Rights Commission oversees this¹¹⁰. However, there is evidence that information should be more frequently provided in time. Compliance with the act needs to be more consistent, and responses from public bodies are often only forthcoming when there is positive information to share. Staff seem willing to help and provide information, but access is often about knowing someone or finding a helpful contact rather than data being systematically available to the public. The law has been in place for seven years now. However, accurate and timely information appears to be hard to access.

Gateway to the Parliament of Malawi



108 [Constitution of Malawi](#) 213 (1) Public Officers (Declaration of Assets, Liabilities and Business Interests) Act Standing Orders 163

109 [Declarations.gov.mw](https://www.declarations.gov.mw). (2022). Summary of Declarations for Political and Elected Listed Public Officers Gazetted. [online] Available at: <https://www.declarations.gov.mw/?p=489>

110 Access to Information Act, 2016. (2017). [online] malawilii.org. Available at: <https://www.malawilii.org/akn/mw/act/2017/13/eng@2017-02-16>

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Parliament should scrutinise the implementation of the Political Parties Act 2018, to ensure that it is place well before the next election.

RECOMMENDATION 2

An independent body should be established to determine Members' salaries and benefits. That there is a review of daily sitting allowance (DSA) to give more flexibility to extend the work of the Legislature. Payment (and withholding) of DSA and other allowances should be made public on the website of the independent body and/or Parliament's website.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Investment in more and better infrastructure is needed including constituency offices, resource centres, committee rooms and office space for senior Members.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Amendments of the Standing Orders should require at least a two-thirds majority and, as far as possible, cross-party consensus.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Requests for time waivers, reducing the 28 days between the Bill appearing in the Gazette and being tabled in the House, should only be granted in extreme circumstances.

RECOMMENDATION 6

Committee capacity should be increased to allow more sitting times, staffing (particularly expert advisors), and Chairs' and Members' skills. Closer follow up is needed on reports and the response from the Executive.

RECOMMENDATION 7

The Public Accounts Committee needs to be at full strength and capacity as soon as possible. This is a high priority.

RECOMMENDATION 8

Parliament considers the rules and resources for cross-party groups and caucuses, and considers providing support for a youth caucus.

RECOMMENDATION 9

There should be transparent and objective recruitment and promotion procedures to prevent discrimination and ensure progression is on the grounds of merit. Specific measures should be taken to ensure that women and other minority groups are supported to achieve equal and proportional representation. There needs to be more investment in the recruitment and training of staff particularly in specialist areas and ICT.

RECOMMENDATION 10

A process for post-legislative scrutiny should be considered by consulting with other parliaments and NGOs for examples of good practice and what is simple, efficient and effective.

RECOMMENDATION 11

Parliament needs the power to set its own budget. It should also have the power to call itself into regular or extraordinary sitting, and to prorogue Parliament without agreement from the President.

RECOMMENDATION 12

Parliament needs to look at ways of scrutinising international treaties and particularly progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

RECOMMENDATION 13

Parliament needs to advocate for increased resources for the independent constitutional bodies. There needs to be consistency in following up on issues presented to Parliament by those bodies.

RECOMMENDATION 14

Members need more support with analysis of the budget and financial issues. The Parliamentary Budget Office should be fully resourced as a high priority and Members should receive capacity development on financial and budgetary oversight.

RECOMMENDATION 15

The Auditor General should be a Parliamentary appointment.

RECOMMENDATION 16

There should be better awareness about the role of MPs. There should be rules banning direct payments or gifts to constituents. MPs should have the necessary skills to advocate for better local services for their constituents. There should be cooperation with local councillors. MPs should not have a vote on local councils.

RECOMMENDATION 17

Working with partners, the Legislature should develop programmes to increase engagement, promote public understanding of its work and encourage wider civic education.

RECOMMENDATION 18

Getting the website live should be a very high priority for the Parliament. Information about the work and business of the National Assembly should be available without delay.

RECOMMENDATION 19

A code of conduct should be agreed for all Members.

RECOMMENDATION MATRIX

To help visualise the recommendations in a format that outlines their priority and our understanding of their remit, the following matrix has been provided, which we hope assists with their implementation:

	Within Parliament's Control	Partially/Not fully within Parliament's control
Very Important/ Urgent	7: The Public Accounts Committee needs to be at full strength and capacity as soon as possible. This is a high priority.	1: The Parliament should scrutinise the implementation of the Political Parties Act 2018, to ensure that it is placed well before the next election.
	18: Getting the website live should be a very high priority for the Parliament. Information about the work and business of the National Assembly should be available without delay.	11: Parliament needs the power to set its own budget. It should also have the power to call itself into regular or extraordinary sitting and to prorogue Parliament without agreement from the President.
	19: A code of conduct should be agreed for all Members.	13: Parliament needs to advocate for increased resources for independent constitutional bodies. There needs to be consistency in following up on issues presented to Parliament by those bodies.
		15: The Auditor General should be a Parliamentary appointment.
Important/ Longer-Term	4: Amendments of the Standing Orders should require at least a two-thirds majority and, as far as possible, cross-party consensus.	2: An independent body should be established to determine Members' salaries and benefits. That there is a review of daily sitting allowance (DSA) to give more flexibility to extend the work of the Legislature. Payment (and withholding) of DSA and other allowances should be made public on the website of the independent body and/or Parliament's website.
	5: Requests for time waivers, reducing the 28 days between the Bill appearing in the Gazette and being tabled in the House, should only be granted in extreme circumstances.	3: Investment in more and better infrastructure is needed including constituency offices, resource centres, committee rooms and office space for senior Members.
	8: Parliament considers the rules and resources for cross-party groups and caucuses and considers providing support for a youth caucus.	6: Committee capacity should be increased to allow more sitting times, staffing (particularly expert advisors), and Chairs' and Members' skills. Closer follow-up is needed on reports and the response from the Executive.
	10: A process for post-legislative scrutiny should be considered by consulting with other parliaments and NGOs for examples of good practice and what is simple, efficient and effective.	9: There should be transparent and objective recruitment and promotion procedures to prevent discrimination and ensure progression is on the grounds of merit. Specific measures should be taken to ensure that women and other minority groups are supported to achieve equal and proportional representation. There needs to be more investment in the recruitment and training of staff particularly in specialist areas and ICT.
	12: Parliament needs to look at ways of scrutinising international treaties and particularly progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.	16: There should be better awareness about the role of MPs. There should be rules banning direct payments or gifts to constituents. MPs should have the necessary skills to advocate for better local services for their constituents. There should be cooperation with local councillors. MPs should not have a vote on local councils.
	14: Members need more support with the analysis of the budget and financial issues. The Parliamentary Budget Office should be fully resourced as a high priority and Members should receive capacity development on financial and budgetary oversight.	

STAKEHOLDERS

Thank you to all of the people consulted as part of this Assessment:

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Hon. Nancy Tembo, MP

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APPENDIX A

CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE MANDATES FOR THE PARLIAMENT OF MALAWI

The following mandates define the duties and the requirements of the Parliament of Malawi:

Constitution of the Republic of Malawi

The Constitution of the Republic of Malawi establishes the Parliament as the legislature and grants its legislative powers. Section 8 states it must “reflect the interests of all the people of Malawi and that the values expressed or implied in the Constitution are furthered by the laws enacted”. Section 66 grants the powers of the National Assembly, subject to the Constitution, to:

1. Receive, amend, accept or reject Government Bills and Private Bills;
2. Initiate Private Members Bills on the motion of any member and amend, accept or reject all Members Private Members Bills;
3. Debate and vote motions in relation to any matter, including motions to indict and convict the President or Vice-President by impeachment; and
4. Exercise such other functions and powers as are conferred on it by this Constitution or by an Act of Parliament and take all actions incidental to and necessary for the proper exercise of its functions.

Legislative Mandates

Access to Information Act, 2016

Corrupt Practices Act 1996

Human Rights Commission Act

National Assembly (Powers & Privileges) Act, 2014

Parliamentary & Presidential Elections Act, 1993

Parliamentary Service Act, 1998

Political Parties Act, 2018

Public Audit Act, 2003

Public Financial Management Act

Public Officers (Declaration of Assets, Liabilities and Business Interests) Act, 2013

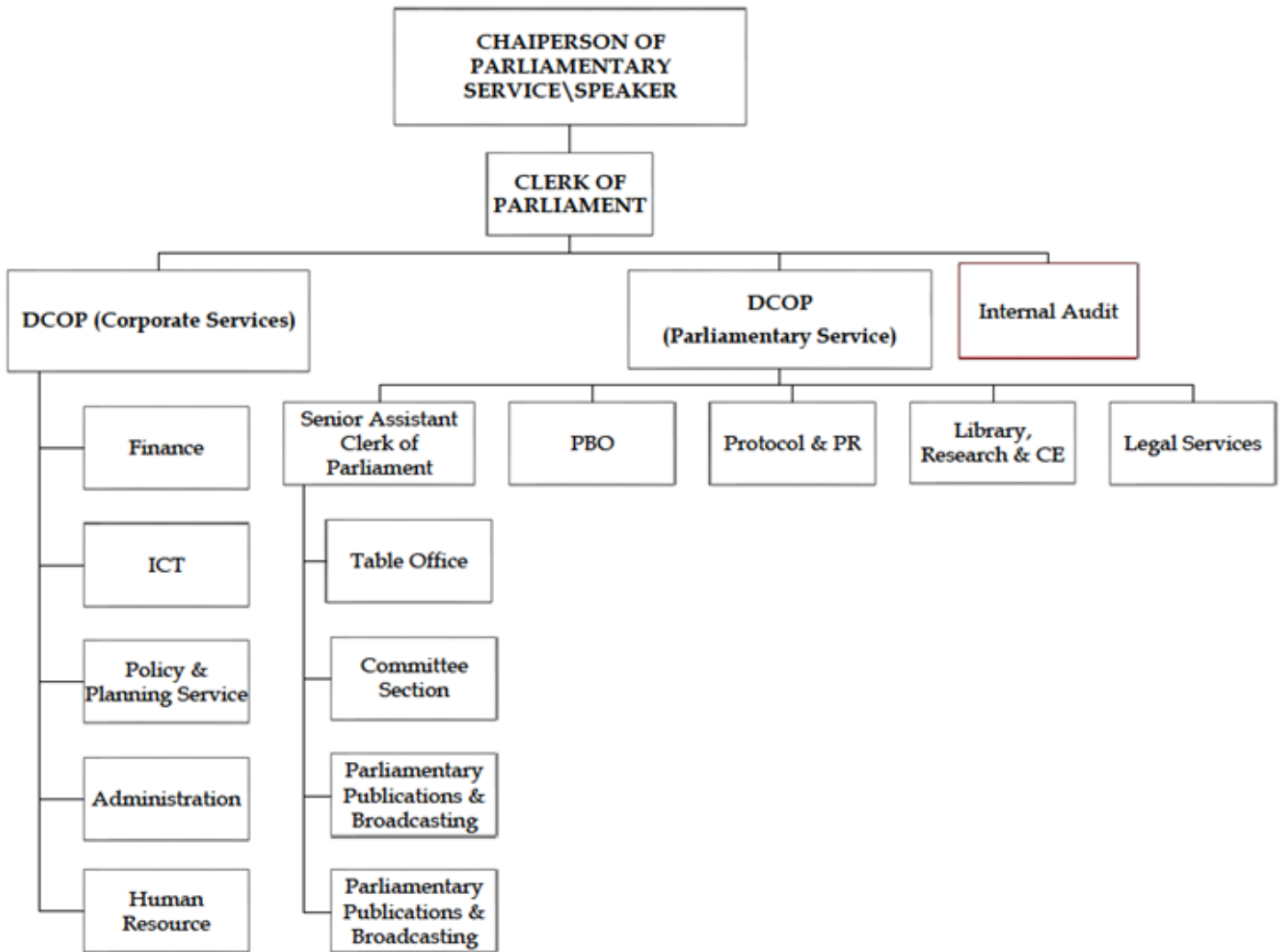
Policy Mandates - available on request from the Parliament - Afiske Nsini, Principal Policy and Planning Officer, (afiskensini@gmail.com)

Standing Orders of the Parliament of Malawi

Strategic Plan of the Parliament of Malawi 2021-26

APPENDIX B

OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT POLITICAL AND MANAGEMENT LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE



APPENDIX C

CAPACITY BUILDING PROPOSAL FOR ICT DIVISION

The following mandates define the duties and the requirements of the Parliament of Malawi:

1. Proposed ICT Training Areas

The following courses are earmarked to build adequate capacity for the ICT Staff. It is strongly recommended to train a minimum of 2 officers in each area for reasons of retention and availability of skills. We can also recommend that while there are considerations to make the ICT officers attend the trainings online, in some cases it is very possible to invite a training consultant to deliver these trainings at the institution (Parliament campus) for the benefit of more officers attending it including ICT staff availability to support parliamentary daily work. The best and convenient consideration is that the staff be at the purpose-built centres where hands-on becomes consistent where labs are already setup with training infrastructure. Such training environments are more effective as daily work does not interfere. Most of such trainings can be done within a six month period but with the ICT support availability they can be spread to some extent.

No.	Course	Officers
1.	Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA)	2
2.	Microsoft Certified Solutions Expert	2
3.	ServiceNow Certified System Administrator	2
4.	VMware Certified Professional-Data Centre Virtualization	2
5.	Red Hat Certified System Administrator	2
6.	Web Hosting Certified Professional	2
7.	Ethical Hacker Certification or any Cyber Security Training and Certification Course	2
8.	Microsoft Technology Associate (MTA) Certification. Developer route	2
9.	Alfresco Content Services Certified Administrator (ACSCA)	2
10.	COBIT or Project Management	2

2. Proposed Objectives

The objectives of these trainings include the following:

- a. equip the ICT staff with the relevant skills
- b. give Members confidence in the usage of ICT tools
- c. capacitate the entire institution with technological knowledge

3. Results

It is expected that at the end of this drive, Parliament of Malawi will attain the status of the ICT robustness as per IPU's expectation. The following are therefore to be realised;

- a. More Members will be able to attend Webinars with confidence unlike before. Despite receiving laptops, MIFIs to use in virtual meetings, others still shun to join webinars because they are not ICT versed due to their poor ICT backgrounds and lack of ICT Trainings.
- b. All Members will be able to access electronic documentation as most communications nowadays are online.
- c. There will be a smooth migration to eParliament as all Members will be technologically sound due to frequent ICT lessons by increased ICT staff.
- d. High Availability of ICT services as there will be timely and proactive attention on cybercrimes against any web based services of the Parliament of Malawi like website services.
- e. Reliable and resilient network resources to all users anytime anywhere.

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