

**BASELINE STUDY: COUNTRY ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF
THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT IN MALAWI**

FINAL REPORT

BY M.P. MUNYENYEMBE & F.M. KALOWEKAMO

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AAM	Action Aid – Malawi
ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BOD	Biochemical Oxygen Demand
BVC	Beach Village Committee
CADECOM	Catholic Development Commission in Malawi
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBNRM	Community –Based Natural Resources Management Committee
CBO	Community Based Organization
CCAP	Church of Central Africa Presbyterian
CEPA	Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy
CHIRECO	Chilengedwe Reserve Council
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CITES	Convention on Trade in Endangered Species
CONGOMA	Council for Non Governmental organizations in Malawi
CPAR	Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief
CRPP	Catchment Rehabilitation and Protection Program
CSC	Christian Services Committee
CURE	Coordination Unit for the Rehabilitation of the Environment
CWMC	Community Wildlife Management Committee
Danida	Danish International Development Agency
DEM	Decentralized Environmental Management
DNPW	Department of National Parks and Wildlife
DREA	Department of Research and Environmental Affairs
EAD	Environmental Affairs Department
ESCOM	Electricity Supply Commission of Malawi
ECOYA	Environmental Concern Youth Association
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EMA	Environmental Management Act
EMS	Environmental Movements in the South.
EPA	Extension Planning Area
FAO	Food and Agriculture organization
FBO	Faith Based Organization
GEF	Global Environmental Fund
GTZ	German Technical Co-operation Agency
ICRAF	The World Agroforestry Centre
IGA	Income Generating Activity
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KEY	Keen Youth Organization
MEET	Malawi Environmental Endowment Trust
MES	Master of Science in Environmental Science
MMCT	Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust
MP	Member of Parliament

MPGRC	Malawi Plant Genetic Resources Centre
MwM	Mthunzi wa Malawi
MZUNI	Mzuzu University
NAREC	Natural Resource and Environmental Centre
NEAP	National Environmental Action Plan
NFPS	Nyasaland (later National) Fauna Preservation Society
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
PAMET	Paper Making Education Trust
PLAN	Plan International.
POP	Persistent Organic Pesticide
RUFA	Rural Foundation for Afforestation
SHOGA	Shire Highlands Organic Growers Association
SOBO	Southern Bottlers
SOER	State of the Environment Report
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VSO	Volunteer Services Overseas
WESM	Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The environmental movement in Malawi has registered tremendous growth since the landmark United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992. From just one organization in 1947, the movement now encompasses hundreds of NGOs, CBOs, FBOs, academic institutions and private companies.

Historically, the environmental movement in Malawi was represented by only the Nyasaland (later National) Fauna Preservation Society (NFPS) (now the Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi [WESM]). The NFPS initially focused on the conservation of fauna and environmental education. Out of the need to create awareness and understanding of wildlife conservation the NFPS funded conservation activities such as educational visits to protected areas, built student hostels in Lengwe, Liwonde, Kasungu and Nyika National Parks and Waza Wildlife Reserve. Now as the Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi, the organization has an expanded mandate which includes the conservation of forests and the environment in general.

The National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) (1994) identified and prioritized nine environmental problems in Malawi, namely soil erosion (ranked as the number one environmental issue), deforestation, water resources degradation and depletion, threats to fish resources, threats to biodiversity, human habitat degradation, air pollution, and climate change. The NEAP also recommended actions to address the environmental issues.

Over the years the Government of Malawi has initiated many programs to mitigate negative impacts on the environment such as review of legislation and policies to make them more relevant and effective. These new policies and laws have created an enabling atmosphere for environmental advocacy by placing emphasis on decentralized environmental management and recognizing and promoting cooperation between Government, local communities, and women groups, non-governmental organizations and the private sector in the management and sustainable utilization of the natural resources and the environment.

In line with the new policy environment and international trends, NGOs in the country have with much success advocated for environmental impact assessments of some projects and on behalf of local communities likely to be negatively impacted by projects. The civil society is consulted on a regular basis for its input into the national budget. However, in trying to bring about changes in environmental policies the civil society encounters many problems and obstacles, including:

- Resistance to change

- Conservation projects often lacking a development component and being considered unattractive
- Limited geographical reach of the NGOs, with the majority of them concentrated in the cities
- Restrictive donor conditionalities
- Competing government priorities – environment not a major priority for government
- Lack of awareness about environmental issues
- Lack of political will – resource allocation to sectors done by politicians
- Poor coordination among environmental NGOs. Often one institution leads in advocacy, not the whole movement.

The Malawi Government has also since 1992 signed and ratified a number of international conventions including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Framework for Climate Change (UNFCCC).

In conclusion, the civil society, in collaboration with other players, has a crucial role to play in environmental management in Malawi. However, we would like to make some recommendations on how the civil society and other key players can enhance their efficiency and effectiveness in environmental management.

Key Recommendations

1. Civil society should commission an economic valuation exercise with the purpose of attaching monetary value to natural resources in order to enable people to appreciate the need for conservation of the resources and also to inform policy based on reliable data.
2. Civil society organizations should build the capacity of their employees in terms of knowledge, skills and numbers to enable them to efficiently and effectively carry out their duties on conservation.
3. The government should try and balance socio – economic development with management of the environment in order to achieve sustainable development.
4. Civil society organizations need to be focused in their advocacy work, for example on policy issues, if they are going to have positive impacts in improving peoples' living standards through sustainable use of natural resources and good governance.
5. Civil society organizations should improve their work through collaboration by forming networks of environmental NGOs.

6. Utilizing linkages with other players such as academics and local communities, civil society organizations on the environment need to step up their advocacy campaigns that aim at integrating considerations of good governance, conservation and sustainable use of natural resources at central government, district assembly and community levels.

1.0 Background and Introduction

This report is an assessment of the role the environmental movement in Malawi plays in influencing environmental policy and public opinion.

A clear understanding of the terms used is required if we are to fully expose the complex relationships between social movements, policies and public opinion.

The term “environment” is used to mean “the surroundings” which consist of three interrelated and interdependent components making up a total environment. The components include the physical or abiotic (non- living) such as air, water, soil; the biotic or biological which consists of all the animals, plants and microorganisms; and the socio-economic or man made environment such as homes, political institutions, schools, money, traditions, beliefs, morals and customs. All these components together with their sub-components influence our livelihoods in one way or the other.

According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, a **movement** is a “loosely organized but sustained campaign in support of a social goal, typically either the implementation or the prevention of a change in society's structure or values. Although social movements differ in size, they are all essentially collective. That is, they result from the more or less spontaneous coming together of people whose relationships are not defined by rules and procedures but who merely share a common outlook on society. Collective behaviour in crowds, panics, and elementary forms (milling, etc.) are of brief duration or episodic and are guided largely by impulse. When short-lived impulses give way to long-term aims, and when sustained association takes the place of situational groupings of people, the result is a social movement.” Environmental protection is the stated social goal of the burgeoning environmental movement in Malawi.

The environmental movement in Malawi is still in its formative stage. It lacks a centralized leadership which can give direction and focus in terms of issues of concern, targeting of policy and decision makers, etc.

Policy may be understood as a defined course of action selected from alternatives in the light of given conditions, that guide and determine present and future decisions with the intention of achieving stated objectives.

Public opinion has been defined by the *Encyclopedia Britannica* as “an aggregate of the individual views, attitudes, and beliefs about a particular topic, expressed by a significant proportion of a community.” The topic in question here is the environment.

In pre-colonial and early colonial times natural resources in Malawi were under open access. The result was that most of the natural resources, particularly game, were being over-hunted. In order to reduce the negative impact of

unregulated hunting the colonial government established national parks and game reserves as animal sanctuaries where hunting was prohibited. A few individuals interested in wildlife conservation came together and formed the Nyasaland (later National) Fauna Preservation Society (NFPS) (now the Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi [WESM]).

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During the civil war in neighboring Mozambique, up to a million refugees from that country settled in Malawi in forested areas, cutting down trees for construction and firewood, thereby significantly contributing to deforestation and environmental degradation. To reverse degradation in these areas a number of non-governmental organizations including World Vision, the Red Cross, Evangelical Lutheran Development Services and others launched environmental rehabilitation projects. However, these efforts were uncoordinated. The need arose to coordinate the activities of these organizations. Hence the creation of the Coordination Unit for the Rehabilitation of the environment (CURE) in the early 1990s.

In Malawi, agriculture provides for 85 per cent of total employment and accounts for about one third of the national income. About 70 percent of the total cultivated land is used by smallholder farmers who grow maize on small-scattered plots with minimal fertilizer use and with ineffective soil conservation practices. Malawi has one of the highest population densities in Africa. There is, therefore, an intense population pressure on the land and with the current population growth rate of 2% per annum, increased degradation of the natural resource base will continue, unless mitigation measures are implemented. The situation is also exacerbated by expansion of estate farms and lack of employment opportunities in the urban centres. There is very limited rural-urban migration and most of the population lives in rural areas where people earn their livelihood by cultivating small parcels of land.

The environmental impact of agriculture-related activities in Malawi could be shown by analysis of the nine key environmental issues listed in the National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) (DREA, 1994). These nine environmental problems were prioritized in the NEAP report and soil erosion was ranked as the number one environmental issue followed by deforestation, water resources

degradation and depletion, threats to fish resources, threats to biodiversity, human habitat degradation, air pollution, and climate change. A careful examination of the nine issues shows that agricultural activities are the major factors contributing to environmental degradation in Malawi. For example, agricultural activities are directly contributing to soil erosion, deforestation, water resources degradation and depletion, threats to biodiversity and indirectly contributing to threats to fishery resources, human habitat degradation, and climate change.

The Government of Malawi has over the years initiated many programs to mitigate negative impacts on the environment such as review of legislation and policies to make them more relevant and effective.

Recent thinking in the environment sector has challenged the conventional wisdom of conservation through coercion with designated no-go areas. Two reasons have contributed to this reassessment of conservation policies. Firstly the critical shortage of personnel to police natural resources and secondly inadequate financial resources have rendered the top-down approach to conservation ineffective. This approach has now been replaced by the decentralized environmental management, which promotes community-based approaches to natural resource and environmental management such as co-management and community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) committees, community wildlife management committees (CWMCs) and beach village committees (BVCs).

With the advent of multiparty democracy in 1993, the country witnessed a sharp rise in the number of non-governmental organizations including those operating in the environment sector. Today the country boasts hundreds of donors, NGOs, community-based organizations (CBOs) and faith-based organizations (FBOs) working in the environment sector. However, no thorough-going assessment of the role of these organizations has been conducted. This report is therefore a response to this need.

1.1 Objectives

The objectives of the assignment were:

1. To conduct a country assessment of the state of environmental movements in Malawi and their influence on policy and public opinion
2. To provide a guide and context analysis for Environmental Movements in the South (EMS) when making decisions about funding to individual organizations

2.0 Approach and Methodology

2.1 Sources of data

In the course of carrying out the assessment study, both primary and secondary data were used. Information was sourced from published work as well as from interviews with stakeholders. Stakeholders were categorized into government departments, academic institutions, civil society, community-based organizations (CBOs), private sector and international/donor community. A comprehensive list of persons and institutions deemed the main stakeholders and therefore consulted appears in Annex 2.

Data Collection tools

Data collection tools that were used in the study included:

- Questionnaire administration (See Annex3)
- Focus Group discussions
- Key informant interviews

2.3 Analysis of Data

Various data analysis methods were used depending on the source and nature of data. Data was collated and analyzed at Bunda and is presented in a non-technical, accessible format.

3.0 An overview of the political situation, with emphasis on the environment

Naturally environmental components are closely interrelated and interdependent such that disruption of any one of the interrelationships brings about a number of environmental challenges. Some of the human factors that bring about environmental challenges are: need to meet basic needs, ignorance on how the environment works, greed for money and lack of responsibility.

3.1 Factors that bring about environmental challenges

3.1.1 Need to meet basic necessities

The high rate of deforestation in the country could be going on because people are doing it out of need. People continue clearing forests for agriculture and charcoal making because they want to meet their basic needs such as food, clothing and sometimes shelter. In the absence of a realistic and workable alternative to their livelihoods, it is impossible to persuade a charcoal burner to spare a tree in the name of conservation and let his family starve. In these circumstances the individual is compelled to go on cutting trees for charcoal so that they can use the money realized from sales to buy food and other necessities.

3.1.2 Ignorance on how the environment works

In the pre-colonial and early colonial times natural resources in Malawi were considered inexhaustible and that they could be used any how. Many people still have the same perception today regarding our natural resources, particularly the renewable resources. This is because the people have little or no understanding of the concept of maximum sustained yield – the maximum use a renewable resource can sustain without damaging or impairing its renewability. The result is that most of the natural resources particularly game such as elephants were and are still being over used /hunted. Many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) within the environmental movement have activities that aim to generate environmental awareness and understanding among people that will enable them address current and future environmental issues.

3.1.3 Greed

Most of our renewable resources such as chambo, Mlombwa, and elephants are over-used because of greed. Many work hard to maximize immediate profits without concern for the future of the resource. Poachers locally exterminated rhinos in Malawi because of their horns despite being fully aware of their dwindling numbers. What mattered to them was to make profits without

responsibility for the future of the resource. A number of NGOs are working with the government to have communities responsible for natural resources around them. Management arrangements such as co-management, and Beach Village Committees are attempts at empowering people.

3.1.4 Lack of responsibility

Until very recently when natural resources when some natural resources have been placed under the control of community based organizations, the majority of the resources were under open access. The resources did not belong to anybody. Nobody was responsible for the resource. As a result individuals were competing to get the most out of the resource degrading the resource in the process. The introduction of conservation strategies such as Community Forest Areas, Community Based Wildlife Management and the formation of Beach Village Committees is an attempt by the government and NGOs to remove the resources from the commons.

3.2 The major environmental challenges in Malawi

The National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) (1994), identifies nine major environmental issues as briefly described below:

3.2.1 Human habitat degradation

Human habitat refers to peoples' settlement patterns that at least ensure the availability of goods and services such as food, shelter, safe and affordable drinking water and the management of domestic and industrial wastes. Human habitat degradation in Malawi is partly due to the rapidly increasing population which is at 2% per annum and partly poverty. Each additional human being requires food, space to live on, and produces bodily as well as other forms of wastes. All these have impacts on the environment/human habitat.

Challenges

Food has to be grown and harvested from somewhere at the expense of natural ecosystems as forests are cleared for agriculture. Malawi has one of the highest population densities in Africa that is heavily dependent on natural resources. It is estimated that about 70 percent of the total cultivated land is used by smallholder farmers for the production of maize which is the staple food for the country. Much of the 70 percent cultivated area represents marginal land not suitable for cultivation and land that is cultivated without land and water conservation measures. Harmful pesticides and herbicides from the agro- industry pollute the environment, making it unsuitable for human habitation.

Urban areas generate about 1,100 tonnes of solid waste per day but there is no adequate collection and management of the refuse. Solid wastes are physically hazardous, they are an eyesore, they smell badly and cause discomfort to those living nearby and leachates from dump sites pollute water resources. The NEAP (2002) estimates that over 70% of the population in the urban areas live in Traditional Housing Areas and that 20% of the people have no access to proper latrines. The two conditions above together with poor drainage system, mostly in Traditional Housing Areas often lead to outbreaks of water-washed and waterborne diseases such cholera and malaria.

Rising crime rates in urban areas due to unemployment makes urban areas not safe places to live in. Unemployment coupled with crowded living conditions increases the risks of people contracting HIV and AIDS.

Response

Promote education as strategic entry point for the creation of environmental awareness and appreciation for conservation.

The government should intensify its Rural Housing Scheme that encourages people to improve on their housing standards through training them to produce and use low cost materials. The scheme will help reduce pressure on poles and grasses for building materials.

3.2.2 Soil degradation

A productive soil is a soil that has readily available mineral nutrients, water, air and the necessary physical properties for plant growth. Such a soil is the basis for the production of food, livestock, timber and other land based products. Considering that Malawi's economy is dominated by agriculture employing about 90% of the population and producing close to 90% of the export revenue and supporting subsistence farmers who form about 78% of the population one realizes that the need to maintain a fertile soil is critical.

On the contrary, thousands of hectares of productive land are, and continue to be degraded in terms of physical properties and nutrient loss. The degradation is due deforestation, burning of crop residues, cultivation of marginal lands without appropriate conservation measures and repeated planting of one type of crop in same plot.

Clearing of forests to open up new gardens leaves the cleared areas bare and vulnerable to splash erosion and its consequent soil and nutrient loss. Lack of organic matter in the bare soil further degrades its physical properties.

Every crop draws nutrients from where it is grown. Those nutrients are locked up in its stem, leaves or fruit after it is matured and harvested. Unfortunately the common practice, in many parts of Malawi when preparing gardens for the next planting, is to burn all plants including crop residues found in the garden. Plant nutrients are lost into the atmosphere in the process and there is a breakdown in soil structure. This is done out of ignorance of the sources of crop nutrients and what crop residues do to physical properties of the soil. Many will burn their gardens clean to impress others that they are hard workers.

Cultivation of marginal lands and riverbanks without conservation measures facilitate accelerated erosion ending up in soil and nutrient loss. Growing of one type of crop on the same plot year after year depletes the required nutrients for the plant. If the same crop is grown in subsequent years, it yields little or nothing at all. This is because the soil will have lost its ability to supply nutrients and can not provide good physical conditions necessary for water infiltration, aeration and plant root development.

A degraded soil means reduced food security, increased poverty, deteriorating quality of water resources and loss of biological diversity. Studies have shown that land degradation has significantly reduced the small holder farmers' production potential (NEAP 2002)

Response

The government in collaboration with NGOs, are working to correct the situation. Major interventions include pegging contour marker ridges, re-aligning ridges on contour, and adoption of agro forestry technologies such as use of *Tephrosia vogelii* and *Sesbania sesban* species. NEAP (2002) has indicated that adoption of soil fertility improvement technologies by farmers is encouraging. The adoption is better now because the farmers are empowered through training to peg contour markers ridges themselves using simple devices such as an A-frame, line level and a line frame which they can make using locally available materials.

3.2.3 Degradation of fisheries resources

The fisheries sector plays a significant economic and nutritional role in Malawi. Fish formally provides 60 to 70% of total animal protein consumption in the country. In 2000 the total catch was 43,000 tonnes valued at 2.15 billion kwacha. It is estimated that 80 to 95% of the total fish catch in Malawi is from artisanal fisheries suggesting that the industry mostly benefits the local people by providing them employment and income. The sector employs over 40,000 fishers and well over 200,000 are estimated to be engaged in secondary fishing industry.

In addition to the regular catch of fish for the table, 40,000 – 50,000 Mbuna (ornamental cichlids) are exported annually for the aquarium trade valued at US\$ 300,000. The Mbuna trade too provides employment and income to Malawians.

Average fish landings are as follows; Lake Malawi 50%, Lake Chilwa 2.2%, Lake Malombe 13.5%, Shire River 11.1% and Lake Chiuta 2.3%. Lake Chilwa at current (2002) production levels of 167kg/ha is one of the most productive lakes in Africa (NEAP 2002).

Challenges

The general trend is that fish catch is going down. Production is now down by almost 20,000 tons /year from a peak in 1972 (NEAP 2002). Production of the favorite fish- Chambo is down by 10,000 tons per year from 14,000 tonnes/year in the early 1980s. In Lake Malombe total fish production declined from 10,000 tonnes/year in the 1980s to 2,000-3,000 tonnes/year in the 1990s. As a result per capita fish consumption is also down from 10 – 18 kg per capita/year in the 1970s to the current 6 – 8 kg per capita/year.

The decline is due to a number of natural and man induced problems. These include destruction of breeding grounds for fish, over fishing, use of illegal fishing gear and the obstruction of fish migration routes. Pollutants such as fertilizers and pesticides from farms are a big threat to the fisheries industries.

Response

Destruction of breeding grounds for fish can be prevented through agricultural practices that use soil and water conservation measures aimed at reducing sediment load in both rivers and lakes. Pollution and the introduction of non-indigenous fish and weed species that upset the fish ecosystems need to be stopped or controlled where they exist. Over fishing is caused by too many people fishing. The department is trying to solve the problem through formation of Beach Village Committees (BVCs) with the purpose of monitoring the number of fishers, preventing non-sustainable fishing technologies, enforcing closed season regulations and promoting fish farming.

Negative impacts of obstructing fish immigration can be mitigated by constructing weirs that have an opening for fish to move up- and downstream. Such an option to fishers needs frequent supervision. Government's promotion of aquaculture in order to supplement fish production from the existing rivers and lakes in order to meet the growing demand for animal protein is a very positive development. Aquaculture is spearheaded by the government with the support of a number of NGOs and churches.

3.2.4 Degradation of forestry resources

Forests resources are important in providing Malawians with a variety of goods and services. Forests provide poles and timber for construction, traditional medicine and fuel wood. Fuel wood makes up about 90% of total energy requirements for both rural and urban populations. Forests play an important role in the water cycle by pumping the otherwise unavailable water from the ground and evaporating it into the atmosphere where it cools, condenses and comes back as rain. As carbon sinks, forests help in mitigating global warming and the consequent climate change. Undisturbed forests offer a perfect habitat to a variety of wild plant and animal species.

Challenges

Huge numbers of trees are cut to provide fuel wood for heating and cooking at household level and for curing tobacco at estates. The demand for fuel wood and wood products is increasing due to the rapidly increasing population and urbanization. The NEAP (2002) estimates that wood demand is about 8.5 million m³/ year whereas sustainable wood supply is 5.2 million m³ per year. The deficit is met through unsustainable use of the forest.

The rapidly increasing population forces people in areas where there is shortage of land to encroach into protected areas for gardens and settlement. This happens due to the collapse of traditional controls over land allocation.

Most agricultural fields that are under cultivation for four or more years have lost fertility and crop yield is declining. Owners of these depleted gardens normally look for virgin land in protected areas. If they do not encroach on protected areas, they often engage in short-term income generating activities such as selling fuel wood or charcoal.

Other causes of forest loss include fires, aphids and livestock. Fires started by retrenched forest staff and vandalism caused damage worth MK104m (NEAP 2002). A disease caused by aphids was responsible for a 30% loss in wood production. Livestock especially goats are a concern at household level where they destroy tree seedlings.

Response

The government has come up with an enabling forestry policy and legislation whose main goal is to improve the quality of life for the rural communities and provide a stable local economy in order to reduce the degenerative impact of development on the environment that often follows poverty (NEAP 200). The

policy promotes participation of the private sector and communities in forest conservation and sustainable harvesting of forest resources.

This is attained through programs such as the National Tree Planting Month, co-management arrangements and the WESM/GTZ Sustainable Indigenous Forest Management Project among others. During the tree planting month a wide spectrum of communities are involved. Several millions of trees are planted each year. The major concern is survival of seedlings after they have been planted (NEAP 2002). Co-management is a bout government managing forest reserves with the active participation of communities surrounding forest reserves through sharing of duties and responsibilities. Communities benefit from the sustainable management of forests. The WESM/ GTZ Sustainable Indigenous Forest Management Project produces juice from Malambe (baobab) Bwemba (tamarind). This helps conserve forests because communities have tangible benefits from the trees.

3.2.5 Water resources degradation

Malawi is endowed with a vast expanse of surface water in its network of rivers and four lakes. Major rivers include the Shire, Ruo, Linthipe, Bua, Dwangwa, South Rukuru, North Rukuru and Songwe. The major lakes are Malawi, Chilwa, Malombe and Chiuta.

The country also has abundant ground water occurring in two types of aquifers. These are the weathered precambrian basement gneiss complex which is low yielding quaternary alluvial deposits occurring in the lake shore plain and the Shire Valley. This aquifer yields up to 20 litres per second (NEAP 2002).

Challenges

Siltation resulting from deforestation and agricultural practices without appropriate land and water conservation measures is the major cause of water resources degradation (NEAP 2002). Deforestation means a lot of run off and very little infiltration into the soil to recharge ground water. The result is a low water table and the consequent reduction in base flow into rivers. Siltation reduces the water-holding capacity of rivers, ponds and other water bodies. Sediments, fertilizers and pesticides from agricultural fields cause turbidity and pollute surface.

It is estimated that 75% of rivers in the country have coliform of over 500 cells per 100ml due to faecal pollutions. This could be due to an increasing number of people living in unsanitary conditions.

As population grows demand for manufactured goods and other services increases. In an attempt to satisfy the demand for manufactured goods, industries use increasing amounts of raw materials and discharge huge amounts pollutants into surface water resources. Capacity of sewage treatment plants meant for particular number of people get overwhelmed with the increasing numbers resulting in raw sewage finding its way into rivers. This is particularly true in urban areas. High Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) in Mudi (Blantyre) and Lingadzi (Lilongwe) is an example of an environmental problem originating from industrial pollution and effluent from sewage treatment plants.

Inadequate awareness and understanding of the beneficial functions and values of healthy catchments limits communities' effective participation in catchment conservation. Inadequate replenishment of the water resources due to droughts also contributes to the scarcity and pollution of water resources. A degraded catchment means reduced quantities and qualities of water resources.

Response

The best intervention to address the water resources degradation is catchment conservation that will ensure that the water cycle is functioning in purifying and replenishing water resources. Sediments, residual fertilizers and pesticides from agricultural fields will not be washed into the water bodies in a conserved catchment.

The Ministry of Water Development, through Community Based Programs, carried out a Catchment Rehabilitation and Protection Program (CRPP) whose aim was to achieve sustainable stakeholder-based watershed management in five pilot catchment areas. The program is meant to reduce soil erosion and improve water availability and quality.

Since the program empowers the local people to undertake catchment conservation work, any plans and conservation works in the catchment will be owned by the people themselves, ensuring their sustainability. The program will relieve the Ministry of financial shortages since conservation works will be planned, implemented and monitored by the people themselves.

Besides the government there are a number of environmental NGOs, within the environmental movement, that are working to manage water resources through catchment conservation.

3.2.6 Degradation of biological diversity

Biological diversity is defined as the variability among living organisms from all sources including, *inter alia* terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part. This includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems. Biological diversity is most conveniently described in terms of three conceptual levels:

- Ecosystems diversity: the variety and frequency of different ecosystems.
- Species diversity: the frequency and diversity of species.
- Genetic diversity: the frequency and diversity of different genes and orgenomes.

Malawi is endowed with a variety of ecosystems as well as plant and animal species. Over 4000 species of animals exist in the country. These include mammals, birds, reptiles, fish and insects. For example the Lake Malawi ecosystem which is made up of Lake Malawi, Lake Malombe and the rivers in the catchment has 500-1000 fish species making the ecosystem the greatest fresh water biodiversity in the world (NEAP 2002). All the fish species except six are endemic to Lake Malawi (NEAP 2002). Populations of some mammals such as elephants in Liwonde may be increasing but the general population trend for fauna in the wild and that which is domesticated is declining.

Malawi has 6,105 plant species that include flowering plants, non flowering plants, ferns, mosses and lichens (NEAP 2002). About 100 of the total existing species are endemic to Malawi. Out of the species endemic to Malawi, 68 are found on Mulanje Mountain. The majority of wild plant species are found in protected areas such as National Parks, Wildlife Reserves, Forest Reserves and grave yards on customary land.

Biodiversity is important because genes, species and ecosystems are the basis of human survival and development. The biological resources are fortunately renewable. If used in a way that will not impair their renew ability, the resources can support human needs and those of other organisms indefinitely.

Challenges

Clearing of forest for settlements, agriculture and fuel wood to meet the requirements for goods and services of the rapidly growing population has removed natural vegetation from about 60% of the country leaving only 36% under natural vegetation. This has eliminated a number of critical habitats. Loss of habitat is a single major factor that drives wildlife to extinction. Due to the same reason of loss of habitat, mammals such as Nyala, elephants, lions and

buffalo are declining in numbers. Five species of birds are threatened and wild dogs and cheetah are critically endangered.

Besides loss of habitat large mammals are poached by greedy people who want to make quick money through sale of skins, tusks, teeth and meat. Most poachers do kill out of greed, lack of responsibility over the resource (animals) or lack of understanding of the nature of the resource and its ability to renew itself. The challenge is how to persuade communities to appreciate the need to conserve and use the resources sustainably.

Response

As a measure to conserve biological diversity the government set aside protected areas. Categories of protected areas include National Parks, Wildlife Reserves and Forest Reserves covering about 20% of the country. These areas provide a home, food and shelter to wildlife.

Besides establishment of protected areas, the government no longer manages the areas through control and command. Instead it has put in place policies that encourage co-management of the resources between communities and the government. Conservation duties and responsibilities are shared between the government and the communities. The arrangement develops ownership and concern among community members for the resource. It also motivates the community to actively participate in the conservation and sustainable utilization of resources from the protected areas. Communities police each and this is more effective than when done by somebody from outside. Guinea fowl farming and bee keeping are good examples of co-management programs.

Malawi adheres to international principles related to biodiversity conservation. The government has signed and ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity whose objectives are the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of the genetic resources. The government is also signatory to about 9 conventions that are related to the conservation of biological diversity.

The government established the Malawi Plant Genetic Resources Centre (MPGRC) in 1992 to coordinate and undertake germplasm conservation activities in the country. Currently the gene bank has over 2000 seed samples.

The re-introduction of Rhino and other species in areas where they were locally extinct will help conserve biodiversity.

Environmental Education provided by the Education and Extension Unit of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife together with Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi is a big success in having communities

appreciate and actively participate in conservation of wildlife both in protected areas and on customary land. Environmental Education is effective in changing peoples' opinions and behavior towards conservation.

3.2.7 Climate Change and Air Quality

Climate is the average temperature and rainfall conditions of a region over a period of 30 years or more. Climate change is influenced by the amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases present in the atmosphere. Emissions of green house gases into the atmosphere could be natural or human induced. The green house gases which include carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide, methane and chlorofluorocarbons let in light energy (solar radiation) to the earth surface. On reaching the earth, the light energy is absorbed by objects such as buildings and vegetation and is turned into heat energy (infrared radiation) and is sent back into the atmosphere. The infrared radiation from the earth is, however, blocked by the green house gases in the atmosphere and is bounced back to earth. The heat energy bounced back by the green house gases is what causes the temperature of the earth to rise – a phenomenon we refer to as global warming. Global warming often interferes with evaporation rates and air circulations globally. This is what brings about climate change evidenced by extremes in temperature and precipitation over a region.

Challenges

The green house gases mentioned above are normally emitted from burning of fossil fuels, burning of wood, (fuelwood), deforestation, livestock and paddy rice production. Though rated as one of the poorest country in the world, living standards of many Malawians, especially those in urban areas, have gone up. Many drive vehicles, some of which are poorly serviced and end up emitting huge amounts of green house gases such carbon dioxide and nitrous dioxide into the atmosphere. Currently there is no attempt by government to reduce or stop the emissions. In an attempt to produce sufficient food for the growing population more forests are cleared for gardens. This is effectively removing the carbon sinks. Despite government calls to conserve forests, deforestation is going on at an alarming rate.

A good number of farmers along the lake shore and other wetland areas grow rice. The anaerobic conditions in the rice fields cause bacteria to denitrify nutrients releasing methane into the atmosphere. It is unlikely that farmer will reduce or stop growing rice to cut green house gases.

The extreme climatic conditions green house gases bring about often result in flooding, water shortages, degradation of land resources, migrations and an increase in water related/ water washed diseases. NEAP (2002) reports

extremes in temperature and rainfall in parts of the country. Severe drought conditions of 1991/92 and floods during the 2000/01 rainy season are examples. Adaptations to such extreme conditions may require Malawians to start growing drought resistant crops, eat non – traditional foods such as bananas and probably subsisting on indigenous fruits. The fact is that not many Malawians are ready to change their eating habits. The only food they know is *nsima*. Currently the country has plenty of rice, pumpkins and other agricultural produce but because there is a shortage of maize people say there is famine in the country. The bad news is that Malawi trend in emissions of green house gases is increasing (NEAP 2002)

Response

The Tree Planting Month Program is a good response to issues of climate change. What is required is to plant and manage as many trees as possible. As the young trees grow they will pick up carbon dioxide from the atmosphere reducing its concentration. This will mitigate the negative impacts of climate change.

The government has put in place the National Adaptation Programs of Action (NAPA) meant to address urgent and immediate needs for adaptation. Among the adaptation needs are consuming non-traditional foods and cutting on the number of meals when necessary.

There is also need for the government to come up with rules and regulations to control emissions from vehicles and factories.

3.3 The legal framework for environmental advocacy in Malawi

The legal framework for environmental advocacy in Malawi fully recognizes the important role played by non-governmental organizations. Since 1994 all the laws and policies that have been enacted and adopted have accorded a central role to NGOs in environmental and natural resources management. Some of these laws and policies are discussed below.

The primary source of environmental policy in Malawi is the constitution which states in Section 13 (d) “*The Environment*

To manage the environment responsibly in order to-

- (i) Prevent the degradation of the environment;
- (ii) Provide a healthy living and working environment for the people of Malawi;

- (iii) Accord full recognition to the rights of future generations by means of environmental protection and the sustainable development of natural resources; and
- (iv) Conserve and enhance the biological diversity of Malawi.”

Following the landmark United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the “Earth Summit”, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992, there has been a burst of activities to implement the recommendations of the Conference in Malawi. For Malawi, as for many other nations, 1992 was a watershed year in environmental and natural resources management. It was also the year when the dictatorial regime that ruled the country with an iron fist for almost three decades was for the first time openly challenged. One net result of these two momentous events were the numerous policy and legislative initiatives on the environment, starting in 1994 with the National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP), which identified the major environmental problems in Malawi; the other was the adoption of multiparty democracy in the country, which ushered in new political freedoms and respect for human rights, as reflected in the repealing of oppressive laws such the Forfeiture Act, the National Security Act (detention without trial), the Dress Code, etc.

The NEAP was formulated through a participatory process involving government agencies, academic institutions, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. It placed emphasis on the devolution of natural resources management to rural communities. It identified priorities and actions and led to the formulation of framework environmental policy and law.

3.3.1 Relevant existing and pending national laws

New post-Rio policy initiatives in the environment sector included the creation of the Environmental Affairs Department to coordinate environmental and natural resources management in the country. New environmental laws and policies have been enacted and many outdated environment-related laws and policies have been progressively reviewed and updated to comply with current environmental trends. The new environmental laws and policies enacted included the Environment Management Act 1996, The National Environmental Policy 1996, The Local Government Act 1998, The National Decentralization Policy 1998, the Land Policy 2002, The Forestry Act 1997, the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy 1999, The National Wildlife Policy 1998 and others. Some of the laws and policies are discussed below, while a summary of the acts and policies is presented in Table 1.

Environment Management Act 1996

The Act is described as “an Act to make provision for the protection and management of the environment and the conservation and sustainable utilization of natural resources and for matters connected therewith and incidental thereto.” The Act spells out the responsibilities of the Minister and citizens in environmental management. It provides for the establishment of the National Council for the Environment with the following mandate:

- a) advise the Minister on all matters and issues affecting the protection and management of the environment and the conservation and sustainable utilization of natural resources;
- (b) recommend to the Minister measures necessary for the integration of environmental considerations in all aspects of economic planning and development;
- (c) recommend to the Minister measures necessary for the harmonization of activities, plans and policies of lead agencies and non-governmental organizations concerned with the protection and management of the environment and the conservation and sustainable utilization of natural resources.

The Act also provides for establishment of a Technical Committee on the Environment, which shall:

- (a) examine any scientific issue which may be referred to it by the Minister, the Council, the Director or any lead agency relating to the protection and management of the environment and sustainable utilization of natural resources and shall recommend to the Minister, the Council or lead agency, as the case may be, such action as is necessary for achieving the purposes of this Act;
- (b) carry out investigations and conduct studies into the scientific, social and economic aspects of any activity, occurrence, product or substance which may be referred to the Minister, the Council, the Director or any lead agency and shall, at the completion of the investigation or study, recommend to the Minister, the Council or lead agency, as the case may be, such action as is necessary for achieving the objectives of this Act;
- (c) recommend to the Council the criteria, standards and guidelines for environmental control and regulation, including the form and content of environmental impact assessments.

The EMA also stipulates environmental planning at national, district and local levels and makes provisions for establishment of environmental quality standards by the Minister. It also stipulates measures for biodiversity conservation, pollution control and fines for offences.

The Act makes provisions for environmental impact assessments for certain projects. This particular part of the Act is especially favourable for environmental advocacy as the EIA process ensures activities that are likely to have negative impact on the environment or natural resources are evaluated before approval.

National Environmental Policy 1996

The Government of Malawi adopted the National Environmental Policy in 1996 to provide overall guidance and framework for the adoption and revision of sectoral environmental policies in line with the principles of sustainable development. The NEP had the following objectives:

- (a) promote the efficient utilization and management of our natural resources;
- (b) facilitate the rehabilitation and management of essential ecosystems and ecological processes;
- (c) enhance public awareness of the importance of sound environmental management; and
- (d) ***promote cooperation between Government, local communities, and women groups, non-governmental organizations and the private sector in the management and sustainable utilization of the natural resources and the environment.*** (Emphasis is ours)

In 2004 the National Environmental Policy was revised and had the following overall goal:

Promotion of sustainable social and economic development through the sound management of the environment and natural resources.

The National Decentralization Policy 1998

In 1998 the Cabinet of Malawi adopted the National Decentralization Policy, which has since been enshrined in the Local Government Act 1998. The Decentralization Policy:

- (a) devolves administration and political authority to the district level;
- (b) integrates governmental agencies at the district and local levels into one

administrative unit, through the process of institutional integration, manpower absorption, composite budgeting and provision of funds for the decentralized services;

- (c) diverts the centre of implementation responsibilities and transfers these to the districts;
- (d) assigns, functions and responsibilities to the various levels of government; and
- (e) promotes popular participation in the governance and development of districts.

The Decentralization Policy has the following objectives:

- (a) to create a democratic environment and institutions in Malawi for governance and development; at the local level which will facilitate the participation of the grassroots in decision making;
- (b) to eliminate dual administrations (field administration and local government) at the district level with the aim of making public service more efficient, more economical and cost effective;
- (c) to promote accountability and good governance at the local level in order to help Government reduce poverty; and
- (d) to mobilize the masses for socio-economic development at the local level.

The Policy provides for the structure, composition and functions of the local government system. By its very structure and objectives, the system provides a platform for broad political participation and advocacy at local level. However, implementation of the policy faces obstacles because some government departments are not ready to relinquish responsibilities to local assemblies and communities, especially in co-management arrangements.

In response to the policy and act, the NGO community in Malawi has developed an Interim Strategy Framework for NGO Support to Decentralized Environmental Management (DEM).

Malawi National Land Policy 2002

The National Land Policy in Malawi has the following goal:

To ensure tenure security and equitable access to land, to facilitate the attainment of social harmony and broad based social and economic development through optimum and ecologically balanced use of land and land based resources.

Specific Land Policy Objectives are to:

- A. Promote tenure reforms that guarantee security and instil confidence and fairness in all land transactions:
 - Guarantee secure tenure and equitable access to land without any gender bias and/or discrimination to all citizens of Malawi as stipulated under Article 28 of the Constitution.
 - Instil order and discipline into land allocation and land market transactions to curb land encroachment, unapproved development, land speculation and racketeering.
- B. Promote decentralized and transparent land administration:
 - Ensure accountability and transparency in the administration of land matters, and guarantee that existing rights in land, especially customary rights of the smallholders, are recognized, clarified, and ultimately protected in law.
 - Set guidelines for establishing economically viable ceilings on land ownership that will be translated into a statutory mandate to prevent extreme land concentration in a few hands, or individuals and/or organizations and extreme fragmentation.
- C. Extend land use planning strategies to all urban and rural areas:
 - Extend land use planning and strategies for disseminating land information to ensure effective utilization of land in urban and rural areas.
 - Facilitate efficient use of land under market conditions to ensure optimum benefits from land development.
- D. Establish a modern land registration system for delivering land services to all:
 - Provide formal and orderly arrangements for granting titles and delivering land services in modern and decentralized registration system that support local governments throughout Malawi.
- E. Enhance conservation and community management of local Resources:

National Land Resources Management Policy and Strategy	1998
Land Policy	2002
Water and Irrigation	
The Water Works Act	1995
The Irrigation Act	1998
The Water Resources Act (Draft)	1999
Water Resources Management Policy and Strategies	1994
Water Resources Management Policy and Strategies (Draft)	1999
National Irrigation Policy and Development Strategy (Draft)	1998
Forestry	
The Forestry Act	1997
The National Forest Policy of Malawi	1996
Fisheries	
The Fisheries Conservation and Management Act	2002
National Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy	1999
National Parks and Wildlife	
The National Parks and Wildlife Act	1992
The National Parks and Wildlife (Amendment) Act (Draft)	2004
The National Wildlife Policy	2000
Population	
National Population Policy	1994
Energy	
Energy Policy	2002
Waste Management and Sanitation	No principal statute
Air and Noise Pollution	No principal statute
Toxic Substances and Chemicals	No principal statute
Transboundary Water Resources	No principal statute

Source: National State of Environment Report 2001 and EAD

3.3.2 Relevant ratified and pending international conventions

International cooperation in environmental and natural resources management is crucial as many environmental problems transcend national boundaries.

Malawi is a signatory to many international instruments, including international environmental instruments, in accordance with the country's constitution, which states in Section 1 that "The Republic of Malawi is a sovereign State with rights and obligations under the Law of Nations." Further, in Section 13 (k) under International Relations, the State has the goal:

"To govern in accordance with the law of nations and the rule of law and actively support the further development thereof in regional and international affairs."

Table 2 gives a summary of the international environmental instruments that Malawi has signed and (in some cases) ratified. It must be noted that international agreements are not part of the laws of the country until they are incorporated into national law as has happened in Malawi with the International Convention on Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

A great deal of progress has been made in the implementation of the Ramsar convention, for example, a Wetlands Association and a Bird Catchers Association have been formed. Lake Chilwa has been designated a Ramsar site, i.e. a wetland of international importance. A State of the Environment Report and a Wetland Management Plan for the Lake have been developed.

On the Montreal Protocol on Ozone Layer, Malawi has achieved the number one position in phasing out methyl bromide in the world and its efforts have been recognized by an award.

Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity is in full swing and a Bio-safety Bill has been passed by Parliament.

Table 2 Status of International Conventions

Convention/Protocol	Date Signed	Date Ratified	Current Status (November 2001)
International Protection of Birds (1950)	?		
International Plant Protection (1951)	1974		
High Seas (1958)	1965		
Living Resources of the High Seas	1966		
Banning Nuclear Weapon Testing	1965		

(1963)			
African Nature Conservation (1968)	1973		
Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (1971)	1971		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wetlands Association formed and chaired by National Parks • 2000 SOER and Management Plan Prepared • 2001 Bird Catchers Association formed
Protection of World Cultural and National Heritage Sites (1972)	1975	1982	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nankumba Peninsula declared National Park assisted by UNESCO • World Bank Project to develop community based trusts
Trade in Endangered Species CITES (1973)	1975	1984	Incorporated into law by act of parliament
Hostile Use of Environmental Modification (1976)	1978	1978	
Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (1893)	1983		
UN Convention on Law of the Sea (1982)	1984	1984	
Action Plan for Zambezi River	1996		
Montreal Protocol on Ozone Layer (1987) (Ozone Depleting Substances)	1987		Methyl Bromide to phase out by 2017
FAO International Convention on Plant and Genetic Resources			
Convention Biological Diversity (1992)	1992	1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporated into law by act of parliament • Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan prepared 2001 • GEF Lake Malawi Project implemented to conserve fish

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GEF Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust established • Chapter in SOER and DEAP prepared
Convention to Combat Desertification (1994)	1994	1996	National Strategy and Action Plan prepared supported by UNSO
UN Framework for Climate Change (1992)	1994	1996	Inventory of green house gases has been undertaken
Basel Convention (Transboundary movement of hazardous wastes)			
Persistent Organic Pesticides (POPs)	To be signed	To be ratified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project for Assessment of POPs under preparation • Identifying areas requiring regulations
Prior Informed Consent (PICs)			
Rotterdam Convention		To be ratified	
Bio-safety Protocol	Signed	To be ratified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National bio-safety framework under preparation • Biosafety Bill has been passed by Parliament • Lack bio-safety technology and need scientific support
Kyoto Protocol	1992	1994	
SADC Protocol on public information, education and participation on environmental development	1992		

Source: National State of Environment Report 2001 and Environmental Affairs Department

3.3.3 Extent of implementation and application of instruments

National laws and policies

Implementation of national policies and laws is hampered by many constraints including:

- Inadequate capacity to enforce laws.
- Abject poverty leading to unsustainable resource utilization
- Anthropogenic pressure on resources
- Low priority placed on the environment: government priority is on food security and not the environment. As a result, it allocates vast resources to food security and very little to environmental management. This is evidenced by the scanty money allocations to Departments of National Parks and Wildlife and Environmental Affairs.
- Dwindling financial resources at national level
- Low understanding and appreciation of environment and natural resources among environmental users and influential leaders
- Inadequate staff capacity in key implementing agencies
- Corruption
- Lack of valuation of natural resources. The value of most goods and services Malawians enjoy from nature and natural resources are not expressed in monetary terms. Because of that, many people do not appreciate the value of the resources.
- Gaps in the partnership between government agencies, the academia, the private sector and NGO community
- Absence of a transparent and fair process to resolve environmental disputes
- Hire freeze by Government
- Lack of requisite training of staff in implementing agencies. Members of staff in government and some civil societies are not adequately trained to effectively discharge their duties. This normally results in wasting the organizations resources and peoples' time. Sometimes wrong pieces of advice given by someone who is not sure of their subject have proved to be disastrous.
- Lack of focus: interviews revealed that many civil society organizations begin with well intended objectives, but with time they start diversifying into areas where there is readily available funding. In such circumstances the aim of the organization shifts from genuinely serving communities to simply fund raising. This is a disservice to the communities.

- NGOs used as income generating activities (IGAs). Some civil society organizations are formed and registered with the purpose of raising funds where a large portion is used to benefit the founders. To sustain such benefits the organizations in question pretend to have expertise in a variety of fields.
- Low staff motivation in government

International conventions

In stark contrast to the rather poor implementation of national laws and policies, Malawi has achieved admirable results in implementing international conventions. Some key international conventions have been domesticated, for example the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and others. With assistance from cooperating partners many other international instruments are being successfully implemented. One of the major success stories is that of the Montreal Protocol on Ozone Layer for which Malawi has received an international award for attaining the first position in phasing out methyl bromide.

The impressive record of implementation of international conventions is perhaps attributable to generous donor-fund inflows as the Government lacks the financial capacity to implement many of its own policies. As an illustration of this point, the Environmental Affairs Department receives fewer funds from its budgetary allocation from the Government for its operations than it receives from donors for specific programmes, usually with an international dimension. Furthermore, the Government of Malawi does not consider the environment a priority sector such as agriculture and food security, health and education which were allocated K21.0 billion (12% of the budget), K25.1 billion (14.5% of the budget) and K17.6 billion (6.2% of the budget) respectively in the 2007/2008 national budget. Meanwhile, the environment and natural resources sector was allocated less than 1% of the total budget.

From the discussion above, it is evident there is an enabling legal framework for environmental advocacy in Malawi. However, this opportunity has not been fully exploited by the environmental movement, which is still fragmented and not well-coordinated into networks and advocacy groups. The civil society can advocate for translation of national policies and laws into action.

3.4 The scope for civil society advocacy in general in Malawi

Civil society advocacy in Malawi covers a broad and still-growing scope. Hundreds of NGOs have been registered and new ones are being registered almost daily. Some of the NGOs are specialized while many are involved in various fields. Many NGOs including those in the field of environment have had to develop survival strategies by involving themselves in fields that are popular with donors. For some NGOs this has meant a constant shift in focus – following the money. It has also been noted that most NGOs are concentrated in the urban centres, thereby denying rural communities much needed goods and services. A representative list of the diverse fields in which NGOs operate is provided below:

- Agriculture
- Capacity building
- Community economic empowerment
- Consumer rights
- Corruption prevention and monitoring
- Development in general
- Economic justice
- Education
- Environment
- Food and nutrition security
- Gender
- General advocacy
- Governance
- Health
- HIV/AIDS
- Human rights
- Workers' rights
- Livelihood security
- Media freedom
- Natural resource management
- NGO coordination
- Orphan care

- Population
- Rights of children
- Training
- Water and sanitation
- Women

3.5 The scope for civil society advocacy in environmental questions

The environment is rightly considered a cross-cutting issue and environmental NGOs as a rule do not have a very narrow focus. They tend to combine a number of issues, for example natural resource management and food security, or environmental management and HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, etc. In broad terms, therefore, the scope for civil society advocacy in environmental issues overlaps with that for civil society advocacy in general. However, some areas can still be isolated as relating specifically or more closely to environmental and natural resources management. These include:

- Agroforestry
- Aquaculture
- Biodiversity conservation
- Catchment area rehabilitation
- Climate and air quality
- Community forestry
- Coordination of environmental NGOs
- Energy resources management
- Environmental advocacy
- Environmental education
- Environmental impact assessment
- Environmental policy and law
- Fisheries resources management
- Forestry resources management
- Fuelwood saving devices
- Soil and water conservation
- Watershed and wetland management
- Wildlife conservation

The majority of environmental NGOs work in the areas of forestry, alternative livelihoods and food security.

The target groups for environmental advocacy include: the general public, interest groups, scientists, authorities and institutions, legislators, cabinet ministers, government officials, communities.

Diverse means of advocacy are used including consultative meetings, rallies, demonstrations, radio and television programs, newspaper articles, web sites, etc.

Table 3 below shows a more or less complete list of environmental NGOs in Malawi and their areas of activities. The list is rather old and is in the process of being updated by CURE.

Organization Name	P.O. Box	City	Sector
Action Aid Malawi	Box 30735	Lilongwe 3	Agric/Fd&Ntrtn*
Active Youth Initiative for Social Enhancement	Box 90588	Blantyre 9	HR/Advoc/HIV/AIDS/Env/Con
Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)	Box 951	Blantyre	Agric/Fd&Ntrtn/Heal/HIV/AIDS
African Evangelistic Enterprise Ministries	Box 30332	Lilongwe 3	Advoc/Lobby/Health
Africae	Box 2346	Lilongwe 3	Agric/Fd&Ntrtn
Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief (CPAR)	Box 30998	Lilongwe 3	Heal/Env
Care International	P/Bag A89	Lilongwe	
CADECOM Malawi, C/O Episcopal Conference of Mw.	Box 30384	Lilongwe 3	Rlf
CCAP Synod - Livingstonia - Development and Relief	Box 27	Ekwendeni	Agri/Fd&Ntrtn/W&S/SME
Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy (CEPA)	Box 5062	Limbe, Blantyre	Env/Advoc
Chilengedwe Reserve Council (CHIRECO)	Box 27	Chilema, Zomba	
Christian Services Committee (CSC)	Box 30123	Lilongwe	
Concern Universal	Box 1535	Blantyre	Heal/Env/Agric
Coordination Unit for the Rehabilitation of the Environment	Box 2916	Blantyre	Env
Danish Hunters Association	Box	Lilongwe	ENV/CBNRM
Environmental Concern Youth Association (ECOYA)	Box 90185	Blantyre 9	Heal/Env/HR
Evangelical Lutheran Development Programme	Box 2467	Blantyre	Agric/Env/Educ/W&S
Eye of the Child	Box 3066	Blantyre	HR/Advoc
Greenline Movement	Box 16	Machinga	Env
Habitat for Humanity	Box 2436	Blantyre	Heal/CCB/Env
Harvest Help Find Your Feet	Box 495	Lilongwe	Env/Fd&Ntrtn
Kaporo Foundation for Rural Development	Box 328	Karonga	Agric/Fd&Ntrtn
Keen Youth Organisation (KEY)	Box 62	Chiradzulu	Agric/Env/Heal
Malawi Environmental Endowment Trust	Box 3053	Blantyre	Env
Malawi Fresh Water Project	Box 126	Chileka	W&S
Mineral & Approp Tech. Applicable in MIw - MATAMA	P/Bag 417	Blantyre 3	Env/Advoc/Educ

Mthunzi wa Malawi (MwM)	Box 280	Zomba	Env/Agric
Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust	Box 139	Mulanje	Env
Mvimondo Moisi	Box 194	Mangochi	Agric/NatRes
Nkhomano Centre for Development	Box 5898	Limbe	Development
Paper Making Education Trust - PAMET	Box 1015	Blantyre	Educ/SME/CCB
Phwezi Foundation for Education, Training & Dev.	Box 222	Rumphi	Education
PLAN International Malawi	Box 2053	Lilongwe	Env/Agric/Fd&Ntrtn/Heal
Projects Office – Blantyre Synod	Box 413	Blantyre	
Rumphi East Development Foundation	Box 30664	Blantyre 3	Agric/Env
Rural Foundation for Afforestation	Box 890	Mzuzu	Env/Advoc
Save the Children Fund UK	Box 30335	Lilongwe 3	W&S/Heal/CCB
Self Help Development International	P/Bag 259	Blantyre	Env/Agric/Fd&Ntrtn/SME
The Samaritan	Box 2835	Blantyre	Env/Educ
The Shire Highlands Organic Growers association (SHOGA)	Box 930	Blantyre	Agric/Env
Voluntary Service Overseas - VSO	Box 608	Lilongwe 2	Env/Agric/Fd&Ntrtn
Warlords Youth Organisation	P/Bag 650	Limbe	Env
Wildlife Action Group	Box 1971	Lilongwe	Env
Wildlife Producers and Hunters Association	Box 40231	Lilongwe 4	Env
Wildlife & Environmental Society of Malawi	P/Bag 578	Limbe	Env
World University Service of Canada	Box 30268	Lilongwe 3	Env/Educ/Heal
World Vision International	Box 2050	Blantyre	Heal/Educ/W&S/
Youth Am Organisation	Box 8	Blantyre 4	Env/HIV/AIDS/HR

*Note: Env= Environment; Agric= Agriculture; Educ=Education; Heal=health; W&S=Water and sanitation; Fd&Ntrtn=Food and nutrition; HR=Human rights; Advoc=Advocacy; SME=Small and medium enterprises

Sources: CONGOMA 2003, CURE 2000 and others

3.6 The main drivers of change in environmental issues

Major players in conservation and sustainable utilization of natural resources are the government, development partners (donors), the private sector and non-governmental organizations as described below.

3.6.1 Government Branches

Central government

The Government's major concern in environmental management is wise use of natural resources such as the soil, water, forests, fishes, air and biological diversity and socio-economic components of the environment. These resources are degraded by people who are greedy, people who are ignorant about how nature works and individuals that have no responsibility about the future of a resource in question. Most often, however, our natural resources are degraded

by poor people who have no immediate and practical alternatives for meeting their basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter. Unless ignorance and the other factors that cause resource degradation are addressed adequately, conservation and sustainable utilization of natural resources can not be realized.

In response, government departments established extension programs or specialized units to address the factors that cause natural resources degradation. For instance the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) established an Environmental Education and Extension Unit in the 70s. The purpose of the unit is to equip communities with knowledge, skills and the motivation to resolve current problems and prevent future one from happening. The department also has a program which allows people to sustainable harvest resources from protected areas including bee keeping. The program provides the people with alternative livelihoods. At about the same time, Ministry of Agriculture established an Environmental Education Unit. Its purpose is to promote soil and water conservation and agroforestry technologies. The unit conducts conservation lecture tours to schools, colleges and communities complementing the then Land Husbandry Section. The Ministry of Water Development through its Community Based Management Programs under the National Water Development Project trains people on sustainable watershed management. This is in an attempt to increase water availability and improve on its quality. Every environment-related department has conservation messages and technologies that it disseminates to communities. Channels used in training and dissemination of information range from workshops, club meetings, radio discussions and educational visits.

To date, with the decentralized environmental management, actual conservation activities are the responsibility of the district assemblies and local communities.

Legislature

Conservation and sustainable utilization of natural resources is guided by policies laws and regulations. The legislative arm of the government comes in at this point. Policies, regulations and laws on conservation are drafted by line departments and are passed on to parliament for debate. Based on their relevance and suitability, the drafts may be passed into laws or rejected. A number of good policies on the environment have been passed since the mid 90s.

It happens, however, that some Members of Parliament (MP) work against the rules and regulations that they make themselves. Law does not allow people to settle in protected areas but for the sake of winning favours (votes) some MPs tell people to encroach into protected areas. They also consider individuals and NGOs that prevent activities that would degrade the environment from taking place as against development.

Judiciary

Those who choose to work against the law by say poaching wildlife or settling in protected areas are brought before the court of law. If convicted, the individual is fined according to the severity of the offence with the hope of deterring them from committing similar offences in future. The fines have been, until recently, too lenient to frighten poachers. Imagine that a poacher makes K20,000 from sale of one elephant tusk and the courts ask him/her to pay a fine K1,000. Certainly the punishment is not adequate to stop him/her from killing more elephants.

3.6.2 The role of civil society

There are many NGOs working in Malawi. The NGOs have very similar objectives though their activities may be different. Action Aid – Malawi (AAM) for example focuses on community empowerment (capacity building), food security, natural resources management, HIV/AIDS and emergency interventions with long term recovery.

Activities for the Coordination Unit for the Rehabilitation of the Environment (CURE) focus on coordination, collaboration, networking and capacity building in community based natural resources management.

The Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi works on biodiversity conservation, wildlife utilization, community forestry, environmental education and communication, community capacity building and training and income generating activities. One notes that all the environmental NGOs aim at raising peoples' living standards through sustainable use of natural resources and observance of sound human rights. Almost all of them aim at achieving their objectives through promotion of environmental awareness and understanding for conservation and wise use of natural resources. For example, WESM has over 1000 registered clubs. These include wildlife clubs in colleges, schools and at community level. Club members are taught a variety of subjects that range from fisheries, soil and water management, conservation of biological diversity to wildlife management and many more. The teaching is done at annual workshops normally conducted in protected areas during the long school holidays. Participants come from colleges, schools and at times local communities. Experts from different conservation fields are invited to give talks.

Besides annual workshops, WESM uses environmental rallies where community members and guests from different government departments and NGOs working in the area of the rally are invited. The two approaches have proved very effective in changing peoples' attitudes and behaviour towards conservation.

3.6.3 The role of other public, national institutions

Other public national institutions active in environmental management include trusts, parastatals, educational institutions and churches.

Trusts

Trusts such as the Malawi Environmental Endowment Trust (MEET) and the Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust (MMCT) received capital funding from the government. The purpose of the money is to provide sustainable funding for conservation activities. To ensure sustainability, the Trusts use only profits realized from the initial investment. The Trusts themselves are not directly involved in conservation activities but they monitor and evaluate those projects that they fund.

MMCT is funding the Department of Forestry and communities for conservation and sustainable use of resources on Mulanje Mountain with funds they obtained from the World Bank through the government. MEET too is supporting a number of Community Based Organizations (CBO) as well as government departments involved environmental conservation with money from the Nature Fund (USAID) which it received through the government. An electric fence that prevents elephants from raiding people's crops on the eastern section of Liwonde National Park is one of the successful projects funded by MEET. The Project changed people's attitudes towards elephants as problem animals.

Parastatals

Parastatals involved in environmental management are the Electricity Supply Commission of Malawi (ESCOM), Lilongwe and Blantyre Water Boards. Heavy sedimentation that interferes with power generation at Nkula has forced ESCOM to consider restoring the degraded catchment of the Middle Shire. The commission also mechanically removes huge loads of water hyacinth that block flow of the river at the barrage in Liwonde. Due to deteriorating quantities and quality of water, the Lilongwe Water Board is funding rehabilitation work for Malingunde and Kamuzu dams. For the same reasons Blantyre Water Board has in the past financed an Environmental Impact Assessment study and tree planting activities on Ndirande mountain. Deforestation of Ndirande mountain has caused the Mudi dam to silt up reducing its water holding capacity. The result has been severe and frequent water shortages in the city.

Schools and colleges

Junior classes (standards 1-5) in primary school teach social studies, a subject that introduces pupils to concepts of the environment. In senior classes (standards 4-6) the environment is taught in existing subjects.

Tertiary education offers certificates and degrees in environmental sciences and natural resources management. College of Forestry and Wildlife at Chongoni in Dedza offers courses on Forestry and Wildlife Management at certificate level. Mzuzu University (MZUNI) offers Bachelor of Science degrees in Renewable Energy Technologies, Land Management, Forestry, Fisheries, and Water Resources Management and Development. The University of Malawi (UNIMA), Bunda college, offers Bachelor of Science degrees in Natural Resources Management, Aquaculture and Fisheries Science, Environmental Sciences and Forestry. Chancellor College, a constituent college of UNIMA, offers Master of Science degrees in Environmental Science. The Polytechnic offers a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Health.

Courses offered at primary and college levels prepare students to be able to make decisions and perform environmental management functions in an effective, efficient and sustainable manner – as individuals, government or civil society officials.

Churches

Many people go to church to pray on Sundays. This makes churches ideal places for the dissemination of environmental messages and technologies. In fact the Bible says that after natural resources were created, God commanded the people to care for the resources. Believers who abuse resources are therefore committing sin. Many churches today try to raise living standards of their Christians through conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. For example the Evangelical Lutheran Development Services in Ddo Extension Planning Area (EPA) in Chikwawa district is working with communities in soil and water conservation, food security, irrigation, improvement of livestock (goats) and provision of portable water. All this is meant to raise peoples' living standards. The peoples' behaviour has changed. One can now see ridges on contour in an area where ridging is a taboo. People in the area believe that ridging interferes with the free movement of the rain making snake. Other NGOs under Churches include the Catholic Development Commission in Malawi (CADECOM), Christian Services Committee (CSC), Adventist Development and Relief Agency, and many more.

Private Sector

Kuti Community Wildlife Ranch, Nyala Park, African Park, Southern Bottlers (SOBO) and tourism destination operators are some of private actors in bringing about change in the environment.

Kuti Community Ranch in Salima is endowed with a variety of plants and animals. Giraffes, Zebras and Ostriches introduced into the ranch are a big attraction. The ranch charges an entrance fees. About 90% of the money collected at the get is used to improve the well being of communities around the ranch by sinking wells and establishing fruit nurseries. Communities are also allowed to harvest grass and other products on a sustainable basis. Benefits realized from the ranch motivate the communities to take an active role in the management of the ranch.

Nyala Park with significant populations of Nyala, Kudu, and a few introduced giraffes makes a good place for recreation and biological diversity conservation. The park is run by Illovo in Chikwawa.

African Park at Majete in Chikwawa has many animals including about 70 elephants that were relocated recently. The animals are big attraction for visitors. This has created a number of employment opportunities for local people as porters, interpreters and guides. There are also labourers employed for the construction of facilities at the site. He park is considering introducing income generating activities in communities around Majete. The current plus expected future income generating activities will me a big drive for the communities take part in the conservation of the wildlife reserve. In doingso, they will be protecting their well being.

Southern Bottlers Limited in the past promoted tree planting activities through the exchange of bottle tops with seedlings. A lot of trees were planted that season. The question is how many survived.

Tourist destination operators in national Parks and other protected areas create many jobs for the local people. Tourist destinations employ cooks, waiters, guides, house keepers, bar tenders, mangers and drivers. These are jobs that should have not been there if it were not for the protected area. The job opportunities created are sufficient to change community members' attitudes and behaviour towards conservation.

Some commercial farms also play an important role in environmental management through maintenance of woodlots, practicing soil and water conservation.

3.6.4 The role of international Institutions and donors

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) the Danish International Development Agency (Danida) the World Bank and many more agencies referred to as development partners play a very important role in environmental management in Malawi. Decentralized environmental management that devolves political and administrative powers to resource users at district and grass root levels was possible with funding from the World Bank and Danida. Unlike the centralized natural resources management approach that used coercion, the decentralized approach creates among community members a sense of ownership and commitment to conserve. The Ministry of Water Development conducted training and awareness campaigns on Sustainable Stakeholder Based Watershed Management with funding from the World Bank. Training of the local people provides them with the necessary skill and motivation to continue managing their catchment long after the project phases out.

4.0 An overview of the environmental movement in Malawi

4.1 A brief history of environmental civil society

Malawi has been settled by humans for thousands of years. Evidence indicates that the earliest human remains in Malawi date back from about 60 thousand years ago. The early Malawians were hunter-gatherers, who were later replaced by pastoralists and then by agriculturalists.

Little is known of the environmental movement in Malawi in prehistoric times, except that some irrigation and soil conservation were practiced. It is also believed that some conservation measures with regard to game animals, such as ritual prohibitions, designation of hunting-free shrines and others, were practiced.

[For the following history of the environmental movement in Malawi we are greatly indebted to Brian Morris (2006) through his book *The History of Conservation of Mammals in Malawi*, which we extensively quote.]

With the imposition of colonial rule, however, the situation changed dramatically leading to loss of control over game by the local chiefs. The colonial government promulgated a series of game ordinances, starting in 1897, which firmly placed control of game hunting in the hands of the Europeans at the expense of the Africans. Thus denied their rights to hunting game, the Africans, with the support of some missionaries, put up a strong and sustained opposition to these obviously discriminatory ordinances. The reasons advanced for opposing the ordinances included deprivation of livelihood, extensive damage done to crops and livestock by wild game and the toll of human life from lions, leopards and buffalo.

A change of attitude in the colonial government of Nyasaland, as Malawi was then known, came about with the 1926 game ordinance, which articulated for the first time the need to conserve animals so that they might be seen and enjoyed by future generations. The ordinance was a response to the depletion of large game. The ordinance also led to the establishment of three game sanctuaries, namely Lengwe, Tangadzi and Kasungu. Although the sanctuaries offered complete protection to animals within them, hunting outside the reserves remained the exclusive right of Europeans who could afford the game licenses. Traditional and subsistence hunting by local people were banned.

Alongside the creation of game reserves by the colonial government (8 had been gazetted between 1928 and 1941), 49 forest reserves were gazetted between 1922 and 1930 with a total area of 2,651 sq miles, representing about 7.1% of the country's land area. The forest reserves were created to protect catchment areas, hillslopes prone to erosion and riparian tracts along stream banks.

The first non-governmental environmental organization to be formed in Malawi was the Nyasaland Fauna Preservation Society (NFPS) in 1947. Inspired by an ardent conservationist, G.D. Hayes, it was formed as a response to the dwindling numbers of wild game and to the then government policy of exterminating large game. In its 1959 constitution the society listed its objectives as:

- a) To foster every means in its power the preservation of wildlife in Nyasaland.
- b) To educate public opinion on questions of wildlife conservation.
- c) To encourage and promote national parks and game reserves wherever this can be done without conflict with sound principles of land use.
- d) To cooperate with similar bodies in other territories.

Membership of the society was open to all who agreed with its objectives. At independence in 1964 the Nyasaland Fauna Preservation Society was renamed the National Fauna Preservation Society and in 1989 changed its name again to the Wildlife Society of Malawi. Since 2001 the society is known as the Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi to reflect more closely the activities of the society. A more detailed discussion of the society's activities is presented under major players above.

Thus for a long time the environmental movement in Malawi was represented by the Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi, until the refugee crisis of the 1980s, when more than one million refugees from Mozambique entered Malawi and settled in forested areas. The result of these settlements was the massive deforestation and land degradation. In response many relief agencies saw the urgent need to rehabilitate the degraded environment. But their efforts were haphazard and uncoordinated. The need therefore arose to create a coordinating body for the rehabilitation of the environment. Hence the creation of the Coordination Unit for the Rehabilitation of the Environment (CURE) in the 1980s, first as a unit under WESM, and later (in 1994) as an independent NGO.

CURE was established in March 1994, in an effort to provide technical support and improve networking amongst NGOs, the Government of Malawi, Donors and other organizations or individuals working in the area of environment. Since the registration of CURE many more environmental NGOs have been formed (See Table 3 above) including major ones such as the Malawi Environmental Endowment Trust (MEET) and Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust.

The establishment of MEET in 1999 was a milestone in the environmental movement in Malawi. It was established as a sustainable funding mechanism to ease the problem of late and limited funding for environmental and natural resources management activities.

Apart from national environmental organizations, many international organizations working in the area of environment have also been registered in Malawi. They include Action Aid, Care International, World Vision International and others.

In addition, encouraged by the government, donors and NGOs, hundreds of community-based organizations (CBOs) have been formed in the country following changes in policies that devolve the management of natural resources to local communities. However, some of these CBOs are beset with serious governance problems such as lack of transparency, gender imbalance, corruption, etc.

With no end in sight to the environmental problems facing Malawi, the environmental movement in the country is destined to grow.

4.2 The role of the environmental movement in influencing policy in Malawi

There is an intricate interrelationship and interdependence between the environment, society and policies as shown in Figure 1 below:

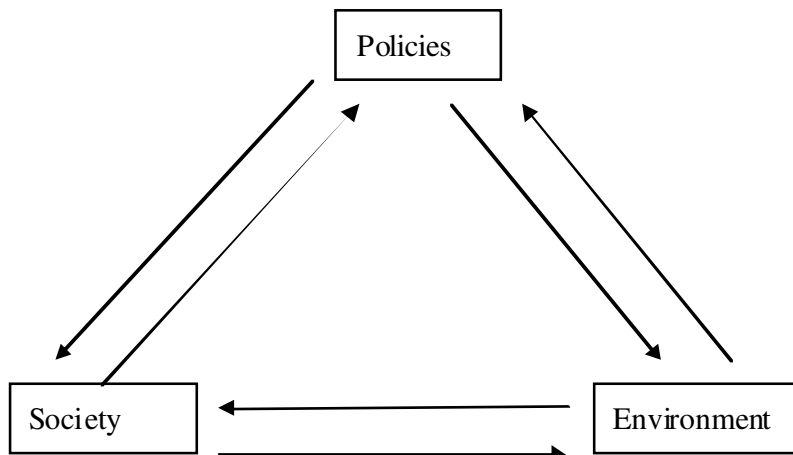


Figure 1 Interactions between Policies, society and the environment

From the outset the environmental movement has been influencing policy in Malawi. At its very first meeting in 1947, the NFPS pressed the government for the declaration of a bird sanctuary at Mangochi, the establishment of a game department, the preservation of predators to check the numbers of vermin such as pigs and baboons. The NFPS was instrumental in establishing Majete and Nyika Game Reserves and in expanding Mwabvi Game Reserve. Over the years, in collaboration with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife, the NFPS

has increasingly been engaged in supporting and financing various educational projects including building of student hostels, formation of wildlife clubs, sponsoring visits to game reserves and national parks.

After the Rio Earth Summit NGOs have provided valuable input into the formulation of environmental policies and laws. For example, NGOs played a crucial role in the development of the National Environmental Action Plan of 1994 and in the subsequent development of the framework environmental law and policy. In addition, the environment has been mainstreamed into national development plans such as the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS), the Vision 2020 and other documents.

In recent years NGOs in the country have with much success advocated for environmental impact assessments of some projects and on behalf of local communities likely to be negatively impacted by projects. The civil society is consulted on a regular basis for its input into the national budget. However, in spite of all its achievement, the environmental movement has not matched the success of human rights and governance NGOs in influencing policy in Malawi. Human rights and governance NGOs are well-funded, well-organized and highly motivated. Above all, they are extremely vocal and visible.

In trying to bring about changes in environmental policies the civil society encounters many problems and obstacles, including:

- Resistance to change
- Access and benefit sharing problems
- Conservation projects often lacking a development component and being considered unattractive
- Limited geographical reach of the NGOs, with the majority of them concentrated in the cities
- Restrictive donor priorities, e.g. Water and conservation
- Competing government priorities – environment not a major priority for government
- Lack of awareness about environmental issues- many employees of NGOs are not conversant with issues such as climate change, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), etc.
- Lack of political will – resource allocation to sectors done by politicians
- Weak compliance monitoring regime – scope for civil society advocacy
- Poor coordination among environmental NGOs. Often one institution leads in advocacy, not the whole movement.

Compounding the problem of environmental degradation in Malawi is the attitude of some policy makers and legislators who view the environment and natural resources as free for all. Many policy makers/ legislators simply do not understand the delicacy and vulnerability of the environment. As a result they view environmental NGOs as anti-developmental, because they are for short-

term benefits. The recent controversy over uranium mining at Kayelekera in Karonga is a case in point. Some politicians are themselves involved in unsustainable resource extraction. A SWOT analysis of the environmental movement in Malawi is presented in Table 4.

Table 4 SWOT analysis of the environmental movement in Malawi

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified personnel • Clearly formulated objectives • Specialization in environmental issues to be addressed • Working directly with the grass-roots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited geographical reach • Lack of focus • Weak advocacy • Inadequate capacity to carry out programmes • Poor networking • Lack of funds • Donor dependency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government support • Donor support • Decentralized natural resources management • An active international environmental movement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of political will • Lack of awareness of environmental issues • Problems of access and benefit sharing • Environment not a government priority • Open access to natural resources

4.3 The role of the environmental movement in influencing public opinion in Malawi

As the country moves towards greater democracy and decentralized environmental management, conditions are becoming more favourable for communities to be steering their own course of development and natural resources management. As a result peoples' active participation is the central issue with the decentralized environmental management strategy. However, government and NGOs' efforts for development, through decentralized environmental management can only realize their full potential if communities are aware and understand environmental issues and are motivated as well as committed to achieve success. The desired situation can be attained through consultations between government/NGO officials and the local people in order to hear and incorporate local peoples' views, needs, capabilities attitudes and traditional knowledge into conservation strategies. Consulting the communities and actively involving them in making decisions and plans of action that will affect them changes their opinions for conservation. They feel they are part and parcel

of a resource that they thought belonged to government. The process makes the people a driving force for conservation.

Unless community members themselves are the driving forces for conservation and sustainable utilization of natural resources around them, no amount of investment or provision of technology and inputs by government/NGOs will bring about any lasting change in the state of natural resources or living standards of the people. Environmental Education and communication plays an important role in making communities a driving force of their conservation programs.

Natural resources degradation due to greed, ignorance and poverty can be mitigated through the introduction of enabling policies for conservation, some form of employment, sustainable income generating interventions and application of conservation techniques that are within peoples' capability.

Suggested solutions to environmental degradation above will, however, need to be examined and then accepted by community members. The process often requires much persuasion, education and training of the local people to have them change their attitudes and behaviour for conservation. Many civil society organizations have interventions that benefit those who change their opinions and adopt the technologies. Among the interventions are bee keeping, fish farming, and production of energy saving stoves. These activities create employment opportunities and generate income. Bee keeping which is forestry based will have the bee keepers advocating for conservation of forests in order to remain in business.

4.4 An overview of civil society actors

4.4.1 The most influential/vocal/important civil society organizations

The most influential, vocal and important civil society organizations operating in the environmental management sector have been discussed above. They include:

- The Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi (WESM)
- Coordination Unit for the Rehabilitation of the Environment (CURE)
- Malawi Environment Endowment Trust (MEET)
- Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust (MMCT)
- The Danish Hunters Association
- Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy
- Rural Foundation for Afforestation
- World Vision International
- Plan International
- World University Service of Canada
- Concern Universal

4.4.2 Existing networks and arenas for collaboration

There are no formal environmental networks in Malawi similar to Civil Society Agricultural Network (CISANET) or Human Rights Consultative Committee. However, fora and media exist for exchange of information and experiences. Some of these are discussed below.

Environmental Coordination Meetings – these are hosted by CURE. Participants from a variety of NGOs on the environment come and discuss papers presented on the day. The coordination meetings provide a good environment for sharing experiences – learning from each other.

Newsletters - A number of NGOs have newsletters that are used to provide information about events taking place that have environmental implications. News letters can be used to inform readers about ongoing or planned conservation activities.

Directories that provide details of an organizations such as name, postal address, telephone number, e- mail address, the objective and area of focus of the facilitate collaboration.

Websites – if well designed and frequently updated websites can be a quick and a relatively cheap means for collaboration

Reports on an organization's activities including successes, problems and lessons learnt make a good source of information that could be a base for networking.

Magazines such as the *Action* that present various environmental topics through cartoons, cross-word puzzles, games are good means for collaboration since other organizations are encouraged subscribe,

Worksheets – individual activity –based worksheets such as the WESMs' Sanitation Module and Alternative Energy Module are useful for disseminating specialized technical information to other organizations.

Surveys with data showing the impact of an intervention can be of interest to an organization undertaking a similar activity. This could form a good area for collaboration.

Revision of the constitution and policy document that require contributions from different individuals provides good area for collaboration.

Membership – members belonging to an organization from attending meetings, receiving newsletters and magazines and sometimes training opportunities. All these facilitate collaboration.

Steering committee meetings bring people together and enables them share experiences from their various organizations.

Donor funded meetings create arenas where officials from different civil society organizations can compare notes research or conservation activities.

4.4.3 The major donors for the environmental civil society

Christian Aid

Danish International Development Agency (Danida)

GTZ

JICA

Norwegian Embassy

Oxfam

The European Union

The World Bank

UNDP

United States Agency for International Development. (USAID)

4.5 Collaboration between relevant academics and civil society

Fruitful collaboration exists not only between the Government and academics, but also between the environmental civil society and academics. Close and mutually beneficial linkages have been established between environmental NGOs and academics. For example:

- Many academics participate in the work of environmental NGOs as board members, workshop resource persons, consultants, advisers, curriculum/training material developers for short courses, guest researchers, research collaborators, etc. The role of academics as researchers is particularly important as policy decisions need to be based on sound evidence rather than opinion.
- Academics also provide the requisite training at undergraduate and post-graduate levels for NGO staff.
- At the same time environmental NGOs provide support and assistance to academics and academic institutions:
 - The Malawi Environment Endowment Trust, through financial support, has been instrumental in developing and reviewing the Master of Science in Environmental Science (MES) Program at Chancellor College of the University of Malawi.
 - The World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) has been sponsoring research programs and graduate training in universities for many years.
 - WESM is at the forefront of the introduction and consolidation of environmental education at tertiary institutions.
 - CURE is collaborating with the Natural resource and Environment Centre (NAREC) at Chancellor College to set up a database on Capacity Building Needs for Village Natural Resource Management Committees.
 - CURE is developing a partnership with the Malawi College of Forestry and Wildlife to enhance NGO capacity in wildlife management.
 - NGOs have also been active in mainstreaming the environment and sustainability in universities.

The above collaboration notwithstanding, there is still room for further collaboration between environmental NGOs and academics, especially in international lobbying, in exchanges of field (case studies) and theoretical experiences, in environmental communication, and in identifying and implementing financing mechanisms for environmental and natural resources management.

5.0 Conclusions

From the findings of this study we can make the following conclusions :

1. From the mid-1990s the environmental movement in Malawi has registered tremendous growth in terms of numbers of NGOs, FBOs and CBOs and the diversity of their activities.
2. The Rio Earth Summit of 1992 provided a strong stimulus for the introduction of new and review of existing environmental policies and laws in Malawi.
3. The new policies and laws have created an enabling atmosphere for environmental advocacy by placing emphasis on decentralized environmental management and recognizing and promoting cooperation between Government, local communities, and women groups, non-governmental organizations and the private sector in the management and sustainable utilization of the natural resources and the environment.
4. Implementation of policies and laws is hampered by many obstacles including lack of political will, capacity problems, corruption, lack of awareness about environmental issues, low priority placed on the environment, lack of focus, etc.
5. The civil society plays a crucial role in environmental management in Malawi by influencing policy formulation and public opinion.
6. There is scope for further growth of the environmental movement and its linkages with other players.

6.0 Recommendations

From the findings above, we would like to make the following recommendations :

7. Civil society should commission an economic valuation exercise with the purpose of attaching monetary value to natural resources in order to enable people to appreciate the need for conservation of the resources and also to inform policy based on reliable data.
8. Civil society organizations should build the capacity of their employees in terms of knowledge, skills and numbers to enable them to efficiently and effectively carry out their duties on conservation.

9. The government should try and balance socio – economic development with management of the environment in order to achieve sustainable development.
10. Civil society organizations need to be focused in their advocacy work, for example on policy issues, if they are going to have positive impacts in improving peoples' living standards through sustainable use of natural resources and good governance.
11. Civil society organizations should improve their work through collaboration by forming networks of environmental NGOs.
12. Utilizing linkages with other players such as academics and local communities, civil society organizations on the environment need to step up their advocacy campaigns that aim at integrating considerations of good governance, conservation and sustainable use of natural resources at central government, district assembly and community levels.

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Annex 2 Persons consulted

1. Mr. Chris Mwambene, Executive Director, CURE, Blantyre
2. Mr. William Chadza, Program Director, CEPA, Blantyre
3. Mr. Benson Chipezaani, Operations Director, MEET, Blantyre
4. Mrs. Betty Mahuka, Acting CEO, MEET, Blantyre
5. Mr. David Nangoma, Program Officer, Biodiversity Conservation and Monitoring, MMCT, Mulanje
6. Mr. Hastings Maloya, Program Officer, Environmental Education and Communication, MMCT, Mulanje
7. Mr. B. Rusuwa, Deputy Head, Biology Department, Chancellor College, Zomba
8. Professor Sosten Chiotha, Southern African Coordinator, LEAD-Southern Africa, Zomba
9. Dr. Daniel Jamu, Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa, World Fish Center, Zomba
10. Mr. C.M. Gunsaru, Director, Malawi Institute of Education, Domasi
11. Mr. B. Mataya, Dean, Faculty of Environmental Science, Mzuzu University, Mzuzu
12. Ms. Mirriam Kapunda, Admin and Accounts Assistant, RUFA, Mzuzu
13. Mr. Chiza Nyirongo, Project Manager, RUFA, Mzuzu
14. Dr. A. Kamperewera, Deputy Director, EAD, Lilongwe
15. Mr. B.M. Mwanyongo, Assistant Director, EAD, Lilongwe
16. Mr. T. Kamoto, Assistant Director of Forestry, Forestry Department, Lilongwe
17. Dr. Roy Bhima, Deputy Director, Department of National Parks and Wildlife
18. Mr. B. Sakala, Assistant Parks and Wildlife Officer, Mzuzu
19. Mr. Undule Mwakasungula,
20. Members of Tiwanane CBO, Nkhata Bay

Annex 3 Checklist of Questions for Stakeholder Consultations

1. Identification of Respondent

Name of Organization	Officer(s) Providing Information from the Organization	Title or Position of Respondent	Number of Years with the Organization

2. Description of Organization

Name of Organization	Type (e.g. Donor, Govt. Dept, NGO, Private Sector, FBO, Academic Institution, CBO)	Summary of Environmental/ Natural Resource Management Activities the Organization is Involved in

3a. In your view, what are the major environmental challenges in Malawi?

3b. What is your the source of information on environmental challenges in Malawi?

3c. How can environmental challenges in Malawi be addressed?

4a. What is the legal framework for environmental advocacy?

4b. Which relevant national environmental conservation policies and laws exist or are pending?

4c. In your view as an individual and as an organization, what are the gaps in the national environmental policies and legislation?

4d. Which relevant international conventions on conservation has Malawi ratified and which ones are pending?

4e. In your view, to what extent are the national policies, laws and international conventions being implemented and applied?

4f. What are the challenges being faced in implementing national policies, laws and international conventions on the environment?

5. What are the areas covered (scope) by the civil society advocacy in general?

6. What is the scope for civil society advocacy in environmental issues in Malawi?

7. Who are the main agents in addressing environmental issues in the country? (consider the government, national institutions, international institutions, civil society, donors and the private sector)

8. In your view, which was the first environmental society to be formed?

9. What do you know about the history of the environmental movement in Malawi?

10. To what extent is the environmental movement able to influence environmental conservation policies?

10 What are the major obstacles civil society encounters in bringing about change in conservation policies?

11 In your view, what is the attitude of policy makers/legislators towards the environmental movement?

12 To what extent does the environmental movement influence public opinion?

13 To what extent does the environmental movement influence public behaviour? How?

14 What networks and arenas for collaboration exist between civil society and other players in conservation?

15 Who are the major and influential donors for civil society organizations?

16a. In your view, is there any collaboration between civil society and relevant academics?

16b. If yes, what kind of collaboration?

17. In your opinion, to what extent has the environment been mainstreamed into socio-economic and developmental plans?

18. Any other relevant information
