



**REPUBLIC OF MALAWI**

**SPEECH**

**BY HIS EXCELLENCY**

**DR. LAZARUS McCARTHY CHAKWERA  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI**

**DURING THE CHAKWERA'S ARTS STARS GALA**

**KAMUZU PALACE**

**LILONGWE, MALAWI**

**THURSDAY, 31<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2025**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Distinguished Artists,**

**Cultural Custodians,**

**Creative Innovators,**

**Tonight is a celebration of your colourful visions, a recognition of the creative spirit that runs through the course of your veins, and a savouring of the flavour of life that you bring into view for all of us to enjoy.**

**In the course of each day, it is what we choose to focus our attention and passions on that either gives our lives meaning or robs us of it. Meaning does not come from pleasure, nor does it come from escaping pain. Rather it comes from the ability to savour and appreciate all the good that you have in this moment. In other words, in a world where we carry devices and technologies that are designed to be a door of escape to some other place other than here, devices and technologies that are designed to be a door of escape to some other time other than now, we must learn and practice the discipline of appreciation, which is the act**

**of savouring all the good that you have in this moment. And I think very few things enable us to do this better than art, because every art form that exists is a spoon that takes a scoop of something good and beautiful about life so that we can savour it right now. For this reason, one of the most important things about being human is that to be human is to be an artist, and there is no human being on earth who isn't one. We tap into the artist in us when we crack a joke, when we dream of tomorrow, when we tell a story, when we pick the clothes we will wear, when we cook our meals and plate them a certain way, when we dance to our favourite song, and so on and so on. And that is why those of you who are our artists are the heart and soul of our society, the true sign posts to show us how to live lives of appreciation and meaning. You remind us that it is not enough in this world to do what is good, nor is it enough to find what is true. We are also continually on a quest to see what is beautiful and pause long enough in each moment to appreciate it. So tonight we celebrate you because within your creative soul lies power and purpose—power to heal, power to unite, and power to build. That is also why my administration has placed the creative economy and tourism at the very heart of Malawi's development vision—not as a footnote, but as a strategic pillar of national prosperity and pride.**

**My 2025–2030 Manifesto makes this intent clear: to transform what the world admires about Malawi into what every Malawian can prosper from. This means creating an economy where a Jimmy Malinga painting puts food on the table; a song by Temwa pays school fees; a performance by Dikamawoko Cultural Troupe brings a village together; where Bonface Ndamera’s Chinamfuna M’bale becomes his pension; and where a Kendal Kamwendo or Joyce Chavula film tells Malawi’s story to the world. This is not just my dream. It is my plan, and Engineer Vitumbiko Mumba and I will see to it that it is done to build on the progress I have already made in the arts during my second term.**

**And what a lot of progress we have made! On World Art Day, April 15, 2024, I became the first Malawian Head of State to address the creative and cultural community directly, promising to enact legislation that secures a better future for our artists, which we have delivered. I have enacted the National Arts and Heritage Council (NAHEC) Act, establishing a central body to coordinate regulation, funding, and development for the arts and heritage in Malawi. I have signed into law the Companies, Registration,**

**and Intellectual Property Centre Bill (2025)<sup>[SEP]</sup> The Copyright (Amendment) Bill (2025). I have initiated reforms that relocate Copyright Administration to the Intellectual Property Centre, freeing COSOMA to focus fully on its core mandate: royalty collection and artist empowerment. I have positioned Copyright Administration to be directly funded by the Government and not from revenue collected by COSOMA, which means more revenue for you. I have increase the revenue distributed to artists from 330 million between 2014 and 2019 to over 5.65 billion in the past five years, 1.5 billion of which was distributed in just the past seven months, which has been made possible by the Blank Media Levy that compensates you for your art, as well as the Copyright Fund, which has already provided MWK 430 million in grants, benefitting over 5,000 young creatives.**

**So now that we have laid this foundation, my plan is to take the development of the arts forward, and I pledge you my full support until 2030, and I thank you for coming tonight to cement this partnership to build your future.**

**God bless you and God bless Malawi.**