



**REPUBLIC OF MALAWI**

**SPEECH**

**BY HIS EXCELLENCY**

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

**AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF  
THE NATIONAL CANCER CENTRE**

**LILONGWE, MALAWI  
WEDNESDAY, 2<sup>ND</sup> JULY 2025**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Today is an emotional day for us as a nation. I think about all the Malawians, both young and old, whom we lost to various types of cancer over the years, and how they did not have a fighting chance because we did not have a Cancer Centre like this. I think about all the Malawians who are fighting against one cancer or another right now, and who lose hope from just seeing how much it costs and how hard it is to go for treatment abroad, and how they now finally have the right weapons to keep fighting. I think about all the terrible stats that Malawi has on cancer incidence and mortality, such as how Malawi ranks the highest in mortality from cancer of the esophagus and second highest in mortality from cancer of the cervix. And behind these statistics of death are stories of pain and heartbreak, stories of loss and the journey of thousands of coffins to the grave, stories of children left as orphans and parents left childless, stories of communities robbed of a son, a daughter, an Uncle, an Auntie, stories of a nation robbed of talent and productive citizens, stories of dreams cut short and hopes torn asunder.**

**And the only question I asked myself when I became President was, “Whom can I approach to help me build a Cancer Centre to stop this carnage?” And after searching for two years for the right partner, the answer to that question finally came in February 2022, when the Director General of the Africa Division of the International Atomic Energy Agency invited me to share with him my vision for this Cancer Centre when we met at the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. And I knew that the IAEA was not just talking the talk, because within six months of that meeting, the Director General was already in Malawi with a team to begin working on the plans for the development of this Cancer Centre and a contractor was on the ground three weeks later. A month later, I was invited to address the 66<sup>th</sup> Session of the IAEA General Conference in Vienna, where I spoke about Malawi’s urgent need to be included in the IAEA’s Rays of Hope initiative of develop cancer centres in underdeveloped countries, and I made a case for Malawi. And now, less than three years later, here we are, opening this National Cancer Treatment Centre to all Malawians as an arsenal against cancer.**

**But like any fight against cancer, the creation of this Cancer Treatment Centre has been a collaborative effort. We could not have done it without the generosity and technical support of the International Atomic Energy Agency. We could not have done it without the support of our partners, especially the Government of India, whose President came to visit us here in Malawi just nine months ago. We could not have done it without the hard work of our cancer specialists, who have lobbied Government after Government to develop this Cancer Treatment Centre without success, but who never gave up. And above all, we could not have done it without the grace of God and the fighting spirit of the Malawian people, who believed in me five years ago when I promised to do something about cancer treatment in this country, who gave me their votes five years ago to give me the mandate to lead the fight against cancer, and who trusted me five years ago to deliver what we are seeing here today.**

**So, all I can say to all Malawians today is thank you. Thank you for your trust. Thank you for your contributions. Thank you for your perseverance. Thank you for your support. Thank you for your efforts. Thank you for your hard work. I**

**must also thank those Malawians in the private sector who found inspiration in the work we were doing here and decided to do their own part to strengthen our country's capacity to treat cancer. A clear case in point worthy of mention is Mr. Thom Mpinganjira, who invested his own resources to develop the International Blantyre Cancer Centre, which I had the honour of officially opening in Blantyre last year, and it is truly an encouragement to see him here as well. This is the spirit of teamwork that we all need to emulate, a spirit that celebrates every win by one Malawian as a win for all Malawians. In fact, in that spirit of teamwork, I would like to call on all private sector players to start preparing to join hands with me in taking the development of Malawi's Cancer treatment forward in the second term of my presidency, which is set to start in just over 75 days.**

**Specifically, one key initiative that I am preparing to put in place in collaboration with Malawians soon after the elections is the establishment of the National Health Services Fund, which will independently generate additional resources for the speedy procurement of equipment, repairs, and medicines for health facilities like this Cancer Centre,**

**so that no patient is ever denied treatment here because of a broken machine or drug shortages. This is just one among several initiatives in the pipeline, but I am just happy that today we can pause to celebrate this huge milestone. So in that spirit of national celebration, on behalf of all Malawians in all districts across the country, on behalf of all Malawians here at home and abroad, and on behalf of all Malawians born and unborn, I declare this National Cancer Treatment Centre officially opened.**

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