

# MALAWI

## URBAN HOUSING SECTOR PROFILE



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## This is a large, abstract graphic composed of numerous small, rounded rectangular tiles arranged in a grid-like pattern. The tiles feature various black and white photographs of people, buildings, and landscapes, creating a collage effect. The overall shape is irregular, resembling a stylized map or a cluster of related images. The tiles are arranged in a way that some are visible while others are obscured, creating a sense of depth and complexity. The images within the tiles include people in various poses, architectural details like walls and roofs, and natural elements like grass and trees. The overall aesthetic is that of a vintage photo album or a digital collage.

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## FOREWORD

UN-HABITAT is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all. Today, the housing situation in Malawi and many other countries, especially for the urban poor, is still far from adequate. To address this challenge, the Government of Malawi embarked on a review of the National Housing Policy and requested UN-HABITAT to contribute to this process. UN-HABITAT welcomes the commitment of the Government of Malawi to facilitating the improvement of the housing conditions of its citizens. UN-HABITAT has supported the Government of Malawi in undertaking a comprehensive, in-depth study of the functioning of the urban housing sector and its strengths and weaknesses. The findings and recommendations of the Malawi Urban Housing Sector Profile are presented in this publication.

Malawi is the first country where UN-HABITAT has applied its methodology for urban housing sector profiling. In a participatory action research process,

a team of Malawian and international experts has carried out the profiling research. The approach is based on a holistic view of housing and focuses on its five components: land; basic services; housing finance; building materials and construction technologies; and labour/employment. The Profile assesses how these components are governed by policy, institutional and legal frameworks. Through a thorough evaluation of the urban land and housing markets (supply and demand/needs), the Profile discloses the factors that hinder markets from functioning properly, leading to the exclusion of certain social groups. Based on the research findings, recommendations have been derived to inform the housing policy reform process in Malawi and the design of programmes, including implementation arrangements, for enhancing the performance of the urban housing delivery system. The Profile is expected to serve as key tool for all actors in the housing sector in their joint efforts to generate affordable housing opportunities at scale.

UN-HABITAT also supports urban sector profiling in Malawi to help inform urban poverty reduction policies. This parallel initiative will provide an analysis of the wider urban context, thus complementing the Malawi Urban Housing Sector Profile. UN-HABITAT's particular focus on housing reflects the importance of this sector for the overall economy. A thriving housing sector contributes to economic growth through creation of employment opportunities in the building materials and construction sector, and other forward and backward linkages.

I wish to express my appreciation and gratitude to all those who have contributed to the preparation of this report.

**UN-HABITAT welcomes  
the commitment of  
the Government of  
Malawi to facilitating  
the improvement of the  
housing conditions of its  
citizens.**

*Anna Tibaijuka*



ANNA TIBAIJUKA

Executive Director

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## A MESSAGE FROM

Shelter is a basic requirement for all citizens. It is only those citizens who have adequate shelter that can contribute effectively to the country's development. The old adage says: 'Where we live matters'. The quality of our shelter determines socioeconomic outcomes of our citizens. In situations where people live in poor housing, they are likely to suffer from poor health and other indicators. This is why adequate shelter is fundamental to the attainment of the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) targets.

The Malawi Government, through the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS), has recognized access to adequate housing (and land) as a prerequisite to the country's socioeconomic development. The Government of Malawi is therefore determined to facilitate improved access to decent affordable housing for all Malawians.

For Malawi to address the critical housing issues, it is important to understand how shelter is delivered and those issues that are hindering improved access to shelter. To date, there have not been comprehensive studies to unpack those issues. The Malawi Housing Sector profile represents the first attempt on a comprehensive analysis of the housing sector in this country. By clearly identifying the issues and suggesting solutions arrived at through a national consultative process, the Malawi National Shelter Profile Study is a useful tool to support the formation of appropriate policy responses to the critical shelter issues facing Malawi today.

The Malawi Government expresses its appreciation to UN-HABITAT for providing the financial and technical support to carry out this study. The Government is also thankful to the national consultants, Government Ministries and Departments, organizations and individuals who have supported this study.

**The Government of Malawi is determined to facilitate improved access to decent affordable housing for all Malawians.**

*Peter Nelson Mwanza*



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Minister of Lands, Housing and Urban Development  
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