

Time for UK and Malawi to forge a stronger, forward-looking relationship

World news story

UK Minister for Africa Vicky Ford visited Malawi from 7 to 8 April 2022 to highlight a strong partnership on issues such as health and tackling corruption



Vicky Ford with HE Dr Lazarus Chakwera

On her first visit to Malawi since her appointment as Minister for Africa, Vicky Ford visited UK Aid-funded projects which support women and girls access health services, education and private sector development in the country.

She visited Mchedwa Primary School to learn how FCDO Education Programme was supporting girls by providing bursaries as well as psychosocial interventions and life skills training through Campaign for Female Education (Camfed). The UK is directly investing £36m into girls' education to help ensure all girls can receive 12 years of education. The UK is also supporting the National Numeracy programme early grade learners build strong foundations in mathematics and sciences.

During the visit Minister Ford also:

- Visited Kanengo Industrial area in Lilongwe to see UK-Malawi partnership in promoting environmentally responsible investment in sustainable construction materials by British International Investment (formerly CDC group) and 14 Trees. BII's \$5m investment should unlock jobs, protect the environment and boost Malawi's economic development.
- Visited a family planning clinic to see how the UK is supporting to strengthen the health system and help young women access family planning services even in hard-to-reach areas. With a fertility rate of 4.4,

rapid population growth poses a major challenge to Malawi's prosperity. The UK has played a leading role in tackling this through making family planning services available and accessible, with real success: total fertility has dropped from 5.7 in 2010.

- Met representatives from the business community, heads of Anti-Corruption Bureau and Financial Intelligence Authority (FIA, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nancy Tembo, as well as the President of the Republic of Malawi, HE Dr Lazarus Chakwera where she commended Malawi's strong ethical stance on Ukraine and Malawi's commendable support of human rights in international fora.

During her meeting with President Chakwera, Vicky Ford underscored UK's support for anti-corruption drive and the brave stance that the president has taken against the vice, a move which will free up resources for key services for all Malawians and unlock jobs.

Reflecting on her visit to Malawi, Minister Ford said:

I have been impressed by the strides that Malawi is making to turn around her economic fortunes through instituting wide-ranging public sector and economic reforms. Of course corruption continues to disrupt this process, but I commend the substantial strides taken to fight the issue through increased action, coordination and a whole-of-government approach.

The Malawi Government has effectively dealt with the severe impacts of Covid and the Tropical storms. Malawi is a strong democracy, and the UK remains a steadfast partner that will work together with Malawi to achieve growth, jobs and freedom, and in defending human rights at home and abroad.

The visit to Malawi was part of a regional visit by Minister Ford and includes visits to Zambia and Tanzania.

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