

# [***Invest in soil health- Mwapata Institute***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B35-PRX1-JDJN-632R-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

Local agriculture policy think-tank, Mwapata has called for the need for Malawi to make serious investments in its ***soil health***.

Speaking on the sidelines of a media engagement in Lilongwe, Mwapata Chairperson Professor Richard Mkandawire said Malawi has one of the most degraded ***soils*** in the region.

He said the continued over-reliance on inorganic fertiliser is compounding the problem.

"One of the recommendations emerging is that some of the resources directed towards fertiliser should also be directed towards our ***soils***. Malawi has some of the most depleted ***soils*** in the region.

"And it is critical therefore that we find ways of investing in our ***soils*** especially when we note that the vegetative cover is depleted across the country. There are times when one wonders whether this country will be turned into a desert," Mkandawire said.

He observed that Malawi needs every effort to move towards programmes that conserve the country's forests and ecosystems instead of losing millions of tonnes of topsoil to Lake Malawi and later to the Indian Ocean.

"You can't imagine how much of the dollar value we are actually exporting through loss of nutrients.

"And one of the issues that I have urged Mwapata to do is to really quantify how much of the nutrients that are lost can be translated to loss of dollars because those nutrients need to be replaced and you cannot use them by fertilizer alone. You have to replace them with other mechanisms including investing in our ***soils***," Mkandawire said.

Mwapata Institute Executive Director William Chadza said the aim of the interface was to highlight some of the important policy analyses and outreach that Mwapata intends to carry out in 2024.

Chadza said 2024 is within the last two years of Mwapata's five year strategic plan.

He said the institute seeks to broaden its scope in terms of looking at various work to support agricultural diversification and also other areas which are key in terms of economic growth for the country in line with Malawi 2063.

National Planning Commission Research Manager Andrew Jamali said generating evidence is critical in developing policies that will help to propel Malawi towards its long term aspirations as espoused in the Malawi 2063.

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