



## MALAWI FACT SHEET

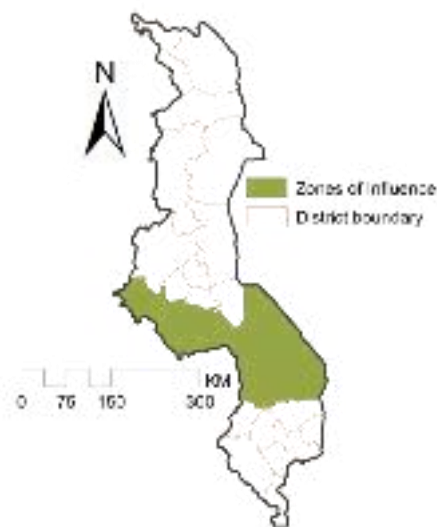
Feed the Future, the U.S. Government's global hunger and food security initiative, is establishing a lasting foundation for progress against global hunger. With a focus on smallholder farmers, particularly women, Feed the Future supports partner countries in developing their agriculture sectors to spur economic growth that increases incomes and reduces hunger, poverty, and undernutrition. Feed the Future efforts are driven by country-led priorities and rooted in partnership with donor organizations, the private sector, and civil society to enable long-term success. Feed the Future aims to assist millions of vulnerable women, children, and family members to escape hunger and poverty, while also reaching significant numbers of children with highly effective nutrition interventions to prevent stunting and child mortality.

### Feed the Future in Malawi

The Government of Malawi has elevated agriculture and nutrition as key national policy priorities. The country has demonstrated leadership through stable governance and economic growth. However, high population density and growth, along with a single rainy season per year, pose a distinctive set of challenges that make Malawi's agricultural growth precarious, and make Malawi chronically susceptible to food insecurity.

The agriculture sector employs 80 percent of Malawi's population. However, only 10-15 percent of smallholders are marketing grain in a given year. While overall poverty rates and kilocalorie intake have improved in recent years, the country's food security and economic development are constrained by high rates of undernutrition, HIV/AIDS, and malaria; underdeveloped markets; and low agricultural productivity. Though Malawi has benefited from decades of peace and security, efforts to increase and diversify both regional and international trade have been hampered by high freight costs, regional conflicts, damaged infrastructure, and unpredictable economic policies. In addition, Malawi encounters cholera outbreaks each year during the rainy season. Lack of access to improved water sources and proper sanitation systems contributes to these outbreaks.

Malawi developed an Agriculture Sector-Wide Approach (ASWAp) through a consultative process with stakeholders and made targeted commitments under the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP). Today, Feed the Future programs complement President Joyce Banda's efforts to address food security, nutrition, and poverty reduction by focusing on value chain development, improved nutritional options, and creating an enabling policy environment.



### Feed the Future Focus

**Target Regions:** Seven districts straddling central and southern regions (Dedza, Mchinji, Lilongwe, Ntcheu, Mangochi, Balaka, and Machinga)

**Value Chains:** Legumes and dairy

**Objectives:** Improve nutritional status of women and children; invest in value chains to develop markets and improve nutritional options; engage the Malawi government to improve the policy environment

## **Transforming Agricultural Value Chains**

Feed the Future investments in legume and dairy value chains are designed to boost their market competitiveness and promote agricultural diversification. These value chains were selected for their potential to expand markets, benefit livelihoods, diversify diets, and leverage donor support. To improve overall value chain productivity, Feed the Future helps strengthen markets and reduce barriers to trade by focusing on building private sector capacity to address the needs of farmers and agribusinesses. For example, Feed the Future provided technical training to dairy farmers and organized them into milk collection and marketing groups, which increased their negotiating power and leverage to sell milk to processors.

## **Building Resilience to Natural Disasters**

Malawi is prone to natural disasters such as drought and floods, leading to food insecurity in many parts of the country. Feed the Future is supporting early warning systems that improve the quantity, quality, and timeliness of information and predictions of food security and other threats. This system monitors and assesses environmental and socio-economic hazards that affect market price trends, nutrition, and cross-border trade.

## **Engaging in the Policy Dialogue**

Feed the Future is aligned with the objectives of President Joyce Banda's new Presidential Initiative on Poverty and Hunger Reduction and is working collaboratively to achieve shared goals. Specifically, Feed the Future is working with the Malawian government to advance priority actions that will support policies to improve agricultural inputs, agricultural trade, institutional architecture, and nutrition. Feed the Future investments are helping to strengthen policy systems to ensure that the Government of Malawi has sound information and analysis on which to base policy development, and working to strengthen the capacity of the government to implement, monitor, and evaluate nutrition programs. Additionally, Feed the Future is directly supporting Malawian civil society organizations engaged in the agriculture sector to build their organizational capacity, helping to develop their advocacy, policy analysis, and communication strategies to improve their participation in the policy dialogue.

## **Nutrition**

The Feed the Future nutrition approach supports Malawi's National Nutrition Policy and Strategic Plan by integrating nutrition into value chains through the prioritization of nutrition-sensitive agricultural productivity, finance, and local capacity development. Nutrition-related activities leverage and complement value chain investments through targeted programs at the local level, focusing on behavior change and capacity building with district-level health workers in order to intensify household-level messaging about dietary diversification and improved feeding for pregnant women, young children, and infants. In 2011, Malawi joined the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement and the 1,000 Days partnership which focus on reducing undernutrition in children during the critical period of pregnancy through a child's second birthday. Feed the Future nutrition activities will support the implementation of "care groups," a community-based model for delivering nutrition education to achieve behavior change, and are expected to reach more than 120,000 households by 2014.

## **Gender Integration**

Feed the Future supports increased female participation in decision-making and control of resources. Both the dairy and the legume value chain sectors have high female participation, making investment in value chains a significant opportunity to support women's economic empowerment. In the milk collection and marketing groups, for example, women are participating in training aimed at improving production, quality control, marketing/business planning, and animal health.

### **Did You Know?**

- **80%** of Malawi's workforce is employed in agriculture
- **53%** of the population lives below the poverty line
  - **47%** of children under five are stunted