

Restoring Malawi's Degraded and Deforested land

GETTING EVERYONE ON BOARD TO ACCELERATE RESTORATION ACTION ON THE GROUND

A DIGITAL AND IN-PERSON FORUM TO
LAUNCH THE CHAPTER

Wednesday, 21st May 2021, Lilongwe, Malawi.

The Context

Land degradation threatens food security, drives biodiversity loss, contributes to the climate crisis through carbon and nitrous oxide emissions, and escalates vulnerability to climate change related disasters. It costs the Malawi economy around 191.5 billion Malawi Kwacha per year (approximately USD 244 million), or roughly 6.8 percent of gross domestic product.

One of the most promising solutions to land degradation is forest and landscape restoration (FLR), a process that aims to regain, improve and maintain vital ecological functions and enhance human well-being in deforested and degraded landscapes. According to a 2017 assessment report of forest landscape restoration opportunities for Malawi, nearly 8 million hectares, or roughly 80 percent of the country's land area, stand to be restored across the country.

Restoring degraded and deforested landscapes offers a wealth of opportunities. There is ample evidence that restored farmland, if managed well, contributes to higher yields, enhanced food security, increase the supply and reduce the time burden of collecting fuelwood and poles. Therefore restoring Malawi's degraded landscapes is pivotal for food, nutrition and energy security and contributing to the realization of Malawi's Vision 2063 - an inclusively wealthy and self-reliant nation.

Box 1. Malawi's Restoration Target

The Malawi government is taking up the challenge and aims to restore 4.5 million hectares of degraded and deforested lands across the country by 2030. This ambitious target has an unparalleled potential to use nature-based solutions to achieve Malawi's Vision 2063, development goals as specified in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy III, and several national environment and development goals in a number of policies such as the National Agriculture Policy (2016), the National Forest Policy (2016), the National Climate Change Management Policy (2016), among others.

Malawi's restoration commitment contributes to the regional AFR100 initiative under the Bonn Challenge. AFR100 aims to restore 100 million hectares of Africa's degraded and deforested lands by 2030. The restoration will also contribute towards the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, which runs from June 2021 to 2030, and aims to scale up efforts to halt land degradation and restore degraded and deforested landscapes across the globe. Led by UNEP and FAO, the Decade will play a crucial role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those related to climate action, eradicating poverty and hunger, and conservation of marine and terrestrial ecosystems.



A typical Malawi landscape in the dry season (Photo credit: J. Lott)

The GLFx Malawi – Lilongwe Chapter

Malawi has just formed a GLFx Chapter. This is a community of individuals with passion to accelerate restoration of Malawi's degraded and deforested landscapes. Through active engagement, collaboration and sharing ideas and information, the Chapter strives to ensure that forests, trees and the functions that they provide are effectively restored, conserved and employed to help secure sustainable livelihoods and ecological functionality of Malawi's landscapes. The vision of the Chapter is to create a new Malawi with sustainable landscapes that are productive, prosperous, equitable and resilient.

The Malawi's GLFx Chapter is an initiative of Malawi's Centre for Applied Systems Analysis (CASA) and the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO). The Chapter is part of the GLFx – a new digital platform for the Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) community. The GLFx is dedicated to passionate people who are working to accelerate action towards more sustainable, integrated landscape management. The vision of the GLFx is to create a world where people and nature can thrive in equitable, prosperous, healthy and resilient landscapes. The GLFx does this by enabling and empowering community members with connections, knowledge, and technology to connect, share, learn and act online and in person.

As the Malawi GLFx Chapter is at its early stages of formation, the Centre for Applied Systems Analysis (CASA) and the International Union of Forest Research Organisations (IUFRO) in collaboration with the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources and facilitated by the GLFx team of the Global Landscape Forum (GLF) plans to hold a digital and in-person event to launch the Chapter on Wednesday, 19th May 2021, at Bingu International Convention Centre (BICC) in Lilongwe from 10:00 hours to 13:00 hours.

“The Chapter is part of the GLFx – a new digital platform for the Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) community”

Objectives of the event

The event aims to provide the following:

1. Evidence of successful landscape restoration actions in the country;
2. Deep insights into the barriers hindering upscaling of landscape restoration across different landscapes in the country;
3. Practical guidance to accelerate landscape restoration actions on the ground;
4. Policy recommendations to inform landscape restoration implementation to achieve success.



Thematic areas

The event will focus on the following themes:

1. Voices of the Malawi Landscapes

This theme offers insights into success stories of restoration actions locally implemented in the country. The conference will hear the “voices of the local farmers” who are directly involved in landscape restoration in the country. The Ngoni Maseko Paramount Chief, *Inkosi ya Makosi Gomani V.* will lead the discussion. Short videos/footages of restoration works of selected landscapes will be showcased.

Reflective questions:

- i. What defines success for locally practiced technologies, e.g. farmer-managed natural regeneration?
- ii. Where do these technologies work well, and who benefits from the results?

2. National framework for landscape restoration

Malawi has set up a framework conditions to achieve its 4.5-million-hectare national restoration commitment. *Ms. Tangu Tumeo*, Programme Officer for the Large-scale Forest Landscape Restoration in Africa project, working with IUCN and the Department of Forestry of the Ministry of Forestry and Natural resources will convene the session and outline these framework conditions, and the way forward.

Reflective questions:

- i. What restoration techniques are best suited to meet our objectives given the current condition of the site?
- ii. Do we have the expertise, tools and capacity to engage in these techniques (and if not, where can we get them?)
- iii. Is the framework for monitoring progress able to comprehensively capture data and information about restoration activities on the ground across landscapes?

3. Land ownership and tenure rights

The government of Malawi revised the Land Act in 2016 to give ownership of land to the citizens unlike

in the past when all land was vested in the presidency. *Dr. Stanley Khaila*, Coordinator of the Shire Valley Transformation Programme (SVTP), will lead a discussion on how the revised customary land laws can stimulate widespread implementation of landscape restoration on the ground.

Reflective questions:

- i. Who actually owns land, and who controls access to and use of natural resources on the land?
- ii. Are there open or latent conflicts over land ownership and access?
- iii. Is ownership of restored trees and benefits from trees clear?

4. Capacities of all actors of landscape restoration.

Successful restoration leading to a lasting improvement in ecosystem function and socio-economic benefits to society largely depends on the knowledge and skills of the restoration actors. *Dr. Steve Makungwa*, a knowledge specialist of FLR and a senior lecturer at the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, will lead a discussion on the knowledge and skills of landscape restoration required at three different spaces, i.e. governance, facilitation, and field implementation.

Reflective questions:

- i. How to ensure that all actors have access to the professional skills that they need to successfully restore?
- ii. Which capacities are needed for successful restoration, and what could be the best mechanism to make these capacities available for those in need?



Thematic areas

5. Youth in landscape restoration

The trees we plant today will be utilizable at the time the youth of today are old. Hence, the youth have a special role to play as stewards of landscape restoration. Steve Kayira, a student at the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources and an interim coordinator of the newly formed “Youth in Landscape Initiative, Bunda Chapter” will articulate the aspirations of the youth about Malawi’s landscapes

Reflective questions:

- i. How can the youth as representatives of the future generation be assured they will have quality land and resources?
- ii. How can the youth be the game changers for sustainable and inclusive land use in Malawi’s future?



What this event seeks to achieve

This half-day hybrid event will bring together restoration practitioners, policy makers, development partners, private-sector partners, youth, civil society representatives, academia, and most importantly, farmer representatives to share insights and perspectives of expanded restoration of Malawi's landscapes. The event will

1. highlight evidence of successful examples of landscape restoration actions in the country;
2. provide deep insights into the barriers hindering upscaling of landscape restoration across landscapes in the country;
3. offer practical guidance to public, private and NGO actors to accelerate landscape restoration actions on the ground;
4. formulate Policy recommendations to inform Malawi's landscape restoration initiative, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, and other relevant policy frameworks (CBD, UNFCCC, and UNCCD);
5. inspire participants to sign up and join the GLFx initiative and digital platform and be part of Malawi's restoration community.





Registration

Participants are required to register in order to participate in the conference. Registration details will be shared in due course.

Event partners

Would you want to partner with us? Help shape the conference? Finance part of the event? See your face in the outcomes of the event? Please email us on: info@casamw.org. Or call Memory Sidira on +26588624368

**“Let’s journey
together as
we strive to
make Malawi
landscapes
sustainable!!”**