



## I. General information

Project Title	Promoting Secure Land Rights for Women and other Vulnerable Groups
Implementing Organisation	FAO
Reporting Period	1 June 2019 to 31 March 2021

## II. Summary

The project UNJP/MLW/078/UNJ goal is to promote rural communities' access to food through their improved land tenure security. Land represents one of the key development challenges to address if most marginalized groups in Malawi are to achieve their Right to Food. Raising awareness of the current land law and its application in improving tenure security on the people of Malawi would contribute to the achievement of the Right to Food by empowering people to claim their rights to land, at the same time creating the demand for accountability from duty bearers. This would be achieved through establishment of and strengthening accountability mechanisms for land law implementation in the districts with the formation of the district land networks, and support the Ministry of Lands in ensuring gender considerations in the new processes introduced by the land laws. The project also intended to ensure that women forums are strengthened in preparation for the roles they would play in the implementation of the new land laws. The identified target districts were Phalombe, Mangochi, Nkhota Kota, Ntcheu, Chikwawa, Dedza, Mzimba and Karonga.

The main outcomes of the project are i) Improved access to information for, and participation of, rural communities in policy and institutional delivery relating to land law implementation and realization of the right to food; ii) Strengthened accountability structures in the implementation of the new land laws.

The project has supported the training of 8 district land networks (DLN) in the 8 targeted districts: Phalombe, Mangochi, Nkhota Kota, Ntcheu, Chikwawa, Dedza, Mzimba and Karonga. DLNs comprise of a cross section of CSOs at district level representing the youth, gender, disability and religious groups. The DLNs have been instrumental in sensitising communities in the district about the land laws and the need to register their customary land. The DLNs have been able to reach out to various structures at village and district levels with messages on land laws and women's land rights. In Mzimba, the DLN facilitate dialogue sessions and interface meetings for women and various structures including the District Executive Committee to highlight the challenges that women face regarding land in the district as well as lobbying for a relook at the aspects of culture that do not facilitate women's economic empowerment. In the districts where pilot land registration has started, the DLNs have been following up on the processes to ensure that women are not specifically disadvantaged. They have been linking up with the women forums, who have been supportive of fellow women where issues arose.



*Figure 1 A DLN member, during an action planning session Figure 2 Facilitation Skills Training for DLN members*

Realising the challenges that the youth face in access and ownership of land, 8 groups of the youth from different backgrounds, representing 320 people were sensitised on the new land laws. The youth highlighted that land is only given to them when they are married. As a result, many single youths only supply their labour to the family farms, most of which are for subsistence farming. The youth groups organised themselves and have been advocating for consideration in land allocation and participation in the land governance structures. In the patrilineal societies targeted in the project, girls are told to wait until they are married in order to have access to land, which will be through their husbands and not in their own right. In the matrilineal societies, both girls and boys complained that with land scarcity hitting most villages, it is impossible to consider a youth for land allocation. As a result, many youth opt to go to South Africa or in towns and cities in search for greener pastures, which in most cases are also not available. 10 youth members have been selected into the national trainer of trainers' team on land governance and were supporting activities of the DLNs in the districts.

Women's agency has been enhanced in the target areas as women can now speak up against violations of their land rights, even in patrilineal societies. Members of the women forums are able to articulate their land rights and support each other in defending their land. Women Forums in Phalombe, Mangochi, Nkhota Kota, Ntcheu, Chikwawa, Dedza, Mzimba and Karonga districts have undergone trainings in confidence building, advocacy skills, leadership and group dynamics. Cumulatively, 320 women have been reached under 8 traditional authorities. Having undergone the training sessions, women have been able to voice out challenges they face and seek redress from their leaders. Women in the target traditional authorities have been referring land issues to the women forums, indicating that confidence in the women forums is increasing. Regional women forums were held to ensure learning and sharing among district women forum leadership. Among others, the 120 women forum leaders were reached with messages on gender related laws and sexual and reproductive rights as they apply in the enjoyment of land rights. With the support of UN Women on gender related laws and UNFPA on Population and Sexual and Reproductive Health. Uncontrolled population growth has negative effects on family land holding and sustainable use of natural resources. Awareness on gender related laws helps women and men to understand even their rights in case of deceased estate, marriage or divorce. In the pilot land law implementation districts of Phalombe, Chikwawa and Nkhota Kota, women forum members have been elected into the Customary Land Committees, allowing them to actively participate in land administration.



*Figure 3 Traditional leaders undergoing a gender and land session*

*Figure 4 Women Forum group dynamics session in progress*

In order to ensure responsive land governance, the Ministry of Lands has been supported in ensuring a gender sensitive new land law implementation. The project supported the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development in engendering the Land Information Management System (LIMS) where an assessment of gender gaps was done and proposed changes were suggested. The workshop also reviewed the terms of reference for the development of the LIMS and the monitoring and evaluation framework for the land reform programme to reflect gender aspirations of the laws. It was noted that all indicators were gender neutral as it would not provide information on how men and women would benefit from the land law implementation. UN Women and FAO facilitated this activity. The Ministry has made recommendations for engendering the LIMS and monitoring and evaluation framework which have been validated. Work on reviewing data collection tools to align them with the revised M & E framework has been done but has been pending validation, which could not be done due to Covid 19 restrictions. The Ministry will have to be supported to conclude this activity through other projects.

The Ministry of Lands was supported by the project to reach out to all the 35 District Commissioners (DC) and Directors of Planning and Development (DPD) in the country on the progress of the land reform and specifically the new land laws. With the decentralised land administration, it is important that DCs and DPDs understand the land laws very well for them to support the activities at their level. More challenges in land administration were shared by DCs and the Ministry officials present took note of them. The district leadership noted the gender concerns over access to, control of land, and committed to ensuring that women and men benefit equally from the new land laws. Among the issues discussed was the continued resistance to land law implementation among Mzimba district chiefs. The chiefs have expressed concern over provisions of the law that allow women's ownership of land in their own right as it is against their culture. Mzimba is a strong patrilineal society where women's property and land rights can only be enjoyed through male family members, such as husbands, fathers, brothers or uncles. The new land laws, on the other hand, provide for women's land ownership in their

own right. The District Commissioner for Mzimba has taken up the matter and over the past year, Mzimba chiefs have opened up for discussions. This engagement is on-going and the Ministry of Lands will need resources to conclude the discussions.

The project has complemented to the work of projects funded by other development partners, such as the European Union and the World Bank through supporting the Ministry of Lands in the Traditional Land Management Area demarcation exercise. The project supported all district level sensitisation meetings. This exercise was the first step in the implementation of the new land laws.

In conclusion, the project has supported preliminary activities in land law implementation, setting the stage for a gendered process. Despite the success registered in the target areas, there remain gaps that future projects could address:

1. Due to limitations of funding, the project only targeted one Traditional Authority per district and only two group village headmen. As a result, the coverage even at district level has been very small. Promotion of land rights for women needs to cover wider areas. Some of the pilot districts were not targeted and therefore not trained.
2. There still remains work for the government to validate and finalise the changes made to the M & E framework and the LIMS. This work will be important so that before the national roll out, the systems will be ready to capture age, disability and gender-disaggregated data.
3. Local councils have a high turnover of staff as seen from the experiences during refresher courses where almost all people trained previously were not present. This affected continuity of activities. There is need for a systematic training sessions covering all district councils so that any movement of staff should not mean loss of knowledge and skills imparted to the district.

Overall, the project was on the right track and had registered good progress towards the objectives.

### III. Progress

#### 3.1 Provide information per Objective/ Result

**Describe the status of implementation per result area through the indicators and explain. Other comments can be added below each table but is not obligatory.**

***Objective/ Result 1: Improved access to information for, and participation of, rural communities in policy and institutional delivery relating to land law implementation and realization of the right to food***

General Indicator	Baseline	Indicator/ Target	Achievement to date <i>Compare planned against actual</i>	Comments
Level of articulation of the relevant	32%	80%	78%	Many people in the target areas understand the land laws and what they should expect once registration starts. Some of the

provisions of the new land laws by rural communities in the target districts.				target districts are under land registration piloting and are demonstrating clear understanding of the process. Despite the Covid 19 challenges, the dissemination of IEC materials has continued in the districts, leading to increase the level of articulation among communities The restrictions in the gatherings created a challenge to reach remaining 2% of the originallt targeted population.
Number of measures implemented to protect women's land rights	0	1	1	Meetings for District Commissioners and Directors of Planning and Development was done in the 3 regions to sensitise them on the new land laws and the required support to women's access to land. In addition, the process to engender the LIMS and M & E framework of the MoLHUD was initiated to ensure that progress in the land law implementation is tracked based on gender as well.

*Comments:*

The project has continued to ensure that access to information on the land laws is possible for the members of communities, including women and the youth. The project has disseminated IEC materials describing the land registration processes. Community engagement with chiefs and other relevant structures in the communities has helped the increase understanding of the new land laws in the target districts. The previous year's training sessions on confidence building sessions for women has seen women being elected in the land administration structures in the target districts and increasing support for each other when faced with land issues. Women in Mzimba, a strong patrilineal context, have been able to raise their voices on land and other issues in forums beyond their communities, notable one being the District Executive Committee meetings. Continued engagement with women and community structures was hampered by the pandemic, leading to 78% of the 80% target community proportions. It is pleasing to note increasing level of articulation among communities.

The project has trained 20 land clerks, 48 chiefs and 32 customary committee members from the 8 districts in VGGT and land administration to help them understand the link between gender and land so that they can commit to promoting gender equality in their day to day land administration. In addition to this, 500 posters on the new land laws were distributed in the various districts.

**Result 2:*****Strengthened accountability structures in the implementation of the new land laws***

<b>General Indicator</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Year Indicator/ Target</b>	<b>Achievement to date</b> <i>Compare planned against actual</i>	<b>Comments</b>
% of local authorities that promote women's access to land	10	80	0	This activity awaits the completion of the review of the Land Information Management System (LIMS) as this will form the basis for training local authorities. Review of the LIMS has been done and the data collection tool have been reviewed but both are pending validation. This has been put on hold to ensure the land law review, which was demanded by the State President, is completed.
Number of CSOs promoting women's access to land	20	100	80	The turnout for the meetings varied with some not reaching the required numbers. As a result, 20 % of the CSOs did not participate in the training sessions. Largely, this was caused by Covid restrictions, which led to some organisations going into full teleworking.

***Other comments (optional):***

The project has increased the demand for accountability for duty-bearers from women and other vulnerable people in the target communities. These include women, the youth and men and women who migrated into the villages. Raising awareness of the roles of various structures in land administration, the global and local land governance instruments and increasing agency for women have contributed to the recognition of land rights violations and ability to seek redress when needed. A cumulative 80 Civil society organisations, with 40 reached in 2020, that have formed district land networks in the 8 districts have continued to support women and other vulnerable groups to claim their and rights in their communities. The project has however not been able to monitor the performance of the district councils in the land law implementation as the activities awaited conclusion of the review of the land information management system, which would provide gender sensitive data on the beneficiaries of the land registration process. The project managed to engage 80 of the CSOs that are promoting women's access to land.

***Challenges:***

In early 2020, the project had been affected by the social unrest that started in May 2019, arising from a contested presidential election. Travel plans were usually disrupted, making community engagement difficult at times and government focus was shifted from the project implementation to management of the situation. The February 3 2020 ruling in favour of a fresh election continued to affect the

implementation due to uncertainty in the government regarding the results of the forthcoming elections. The project was not spared the effects of the Covid 19 restrictions which did not allow large gatherings and regular travel to project communities. The project sought a no cost extension to the end of March 2021 to be able to finish implementing the remaining activities. In addition to this, a couple of months after the fresh elections, the President of Malawi announced that, due to the dissenting views that chiefs continued to raise against the land laws, all land laws were to be reviewed and sent back to parliament with the proposed amendments. This brought a halt to most activities involving communities until the end of the year. Despite these challenges, some progress has still been registered in ensuring gender considerations in and law implementation, especially where training sessions were done outside the communities and community engagement continued through CSOs that are based in the districts.

### 3.2 Cross sectorial issues

**Tick in the first column which cross-sectorial issues are relevant for the programme. Specify in the second and third column if this is reflected in activities and budget or not.**

<b>Cross sectorial theme</b>	<b>Included in the program</b> <i>X if yes</i>	<b>Specific activities developed for the theme</b> <i>X if yes</i>	<b>Specific budget dedicated to the theme</b> <i>X if yes</i>
Gender	X	X	X
HIV/AIDS			
Climate change			
Good Governance	X	X	X
Sustainable Development	X	X	X
Children's rights	X		

## IV. Financial status

### 4.1 Budget status

Fill in date

state on affairs on 31/03/2021

<b>Provided</b>	<b>% spent</b>
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	<b>Euro</b>	<b>Exchange rate</b>	<b>Local currency</b>	
Total budget	142,141			
Instalment 1:	90,000			
	Received on: June 2019			
Instalment 2:	52,141			
	Received on: January 2020			
Instalment 3:				
	Received on:			
Instalment 4:				
	Received on:			
	Date request next instalment: No more funds being requested			

**Have there been constraints with the financial transactions, exchange rates or other financial issues that impact negatively on the project?**

None

#### 4.2 Expenditure

If the budget is planned per Budget Category, give an overview of the expenditure per cost section

#### UNDG Budget Format

<b>Category</b>	<b>Budget (USD)</b>	<b>Expenses (USD)</b>	<b>Balance (USD)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Staff and other personnel costs	14,135	11,350	2,785	
Supplies, Commodities, Materials	15,098	3,394	11,704	
Equipment, Vehicles and Furniture including Depreciation			-	
Contractual Services	-		-	
Travel	21,057	13,715	7,342	
Transfer and Grants to counterparts	-		-	
General Operating & Other direct costs	82,420	95,049	(12,629)	The over-expenditure is within the 25% Budget flexibility rule per budget

				Category - see the below note with the explanation on the over-expenditure
			-	
<b>Total programmable cost</b>	<b>132,710</b>	<b>123,509</b>	<b>9,201</b>	
Indirect costs (7% of Programmable amount)	9,290	8,646	644	
<b>Total</b>	<b>142,000</b>	<b>132,154</b>	<b>9,845</b>	

**Note on the over expenditure:**

The residential training sessions and review meetings attracted more costs hence the over expenditure. The need to pay accommodation and conference packages for participants was more costly than conducting the sessions in the communities. Residential meetings were necessary for participants' concentration within the available time.

#### 4.3 Follow-up external audits/evaluation

**If an external audit or evaluation related to the programme was carried out during this monitoring period explain how recommendations will be/are acted upon. Please indicate which type of audit / evaluation was carried out and by whom.**

There's no external audit or evaluation which has been carried out under the project.

#### V. Next report

**Give a brief overview of the risks, points of special interest, challenges and prospects for the near future requiring specific follow-up**

This is the end of the project and no further reports will be prepared. However, the project has been a catalyst of many interventions that the CSOs have initiated in the districts.