



**SPEECH BY HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR DR
DESMOND BIKOKO**

**AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE
LILONGWE INTERNATIONAL MAYORS FORUM**

ON

WEDNESDAY 16TH MAY, 2018

**AT BINGU INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION
CENTER (BICC)**

LILONGWE, MALAWI

- The Guest of Honour, Hon. Kondwani Nankhumwa MP, Minister of Local Government and Rural Development
- Honorable Ministers here present
- Honorable Mayors and all Distinguished delegates
- Principal Secretary for the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Mr. Keswell Dakamau
- Lilongwe City Councillors
- Senior Government Officials
- Ms. Maria Jose Torres Macho, UNDP Resident Coordinator of
- Dr. Jong-Soo Yoon, Head of the United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD)
- Dr. Najat Zarrouk, Director of the African Local Governments Academy (ALGA)
- Dr. Jean D'Aragnon Senior Sustainable Development Expert at United Nations office for Sustainable Development (UNNOSD)
- The Chief Executive Officer, Lilongwe City Council
- Management and Staff of the UNDP
- Members of Organizing Committee
- The Facilitator, Dr. Henry Chingaipe

- Members of the Press
- Ladies and Gentlemen

The Guest of Honour, Distinguished Delegates, Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my singular honour and privilege to welcome you, Honourable Minister, as our Guest of Honour, to the Second International Mayors Forum. My first international trip as Mayor of Lilongwe was to Vientiane, Lao PDR in Asia in March last year. The Laos meeting, amongst other things, agreed that there is a strong need to establish an international platform where Mayors and city leaders can exchange on the experiences of their cities and share their vision on local actions to achieve sustainable cities by 2030. During the Laos meeting, I had discussions with Dr. Jean D’Aragon and his team where I lobbied that the City of Lilongwe and Malawi host the next Forum. We are therefore here today as a result of that lobbying. I want to thank Dr. Jean D’Aragon and your team for accepting our lobbying and hosting the Forum in Lilongwe.

Honourable Minister, this particular Mayor’s Forum historical as it is being held in Africa for the first time. The City of Lilongwe and as Malawi nation, we should be proud and feel privileged to be the first host of such an important Forum. I want to the

Government of His Excellency Professor Authur Peter Mutharika and your Ministry for accepting and supporting the Forum.

In this regard, I wish to welcome all our foreign delegates here to Malawi – **the Warm Heart of Africa** and the City of Lilongwe – **the Garden City of Malawi**. You have all honoured us with your presence. Honorable Minister, The Forum is being attended by Mayors and City leaders from over 90 countries.

The Lilongwe International Mayors Forum will provide great insight to cities not only in Malawi but worldwide. This is clearly evident in the theme for the Forum: **High level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies, with special attention to SDGs 6, 7, 12, 15 and 17**. Undoubtedly, this is also in line with developments that are actually happening in many countries in areas of infrastructural and environmental developments as indicated in the Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG 11).

The Guest of Honour and Distinguished Delegates

Often times in developing countries like Malawi, there is a presumption that cities like Lilongwe offer better opportunities

than the rural areas. This has consequently led to increased rural to urban migration. As a result of the growing population and urbanization, cities are faced with a boom in population growth with significant numbers of people living in slums and illegal construction of settlements without proper land allocation and plans from the city authorities.

We are grateful, as Lilongwe City Council, to the Malawi Government and cooperating to all our partners for working with us to provide better housing and environmental services. Through such partnerships, the Lilongwe City Council has managed to construct waste transfer stations which is one of our current initiatives to develop effective sanitation service delivery in the city as well as encouraging the recycling and re-use of waste materials. These facilities are constructed in proximity with some of the city's highly populated areas in order to provide a platform that enables local small and medium entrepreneurs, particularly women, to produce products from treated and recycled waste, which are later sold to enable them earn a decent living.

Under the same partnerships, the Lilongwe City Council has also promoted provision of decent low cost housing units to cater for

the needs of the urban poor especially in some of the city's informal areas. This is in line with our strategic agenda of attaining a Slum free city.

Distinguished delegates to this Forum will be able to appreciate these developments during site visits that have been scheduled for tomorrow, 17th May 2018. We believe that your visit to two project sites of this nature will indeed give you a clear picture of the efforts being made to move in line with SDG Goal 11 which hinges on Sustainable Cities and Communities.

Let me take this opportunity to commend the Government of Malawi through your Ministry, Honourable Minister, the UNDP, and the Lilongwe City Council, for the remarkable work and resources they all put in the preparation of this Forum. I also wish to register my vote of thanks to all other stakeholders for the financial and material support and assistance rendered to the Lilongwe City Council to make this Mayors Forum a success.

Finally, let me encourage my fellow Mayors from across the world to work together in order to gather adequate knowledge and skills that can be used in executing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at local level. Let us use this opportunity to share

our knowledge and experiences so that together we can move towards the same direction in improving the lives of all our people globally.

Distinguished delegates, enjoy your stay in Lilongwe and enjoy the warmth the people of Malawi in general and the City of Lilongwe in particular. Outside the Forum, I wish to encourage all delegates to experience the Malawi hospitality. My office has made arrangement with a local Café and grill called N1 just within walking distance from here where you could relax and enjoy music, drinks and food.

Honourable Guest of Honour, Distinguished Delegates, Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you all for your attention and wish the Lilongwe International Mayors Forum the very best of success.