

## SPEECH

### **BY UNICEF REPRESENTATIVE MS. CARRIE AUER at the Handover of Vehicles, Motorcycles and Bicycles to Malawi Police Service**

The Inspector-General of the Malawi Police Service,

The Deputy Commissioner,

Distinguished Invited Guests,

Members of the Press,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to be here at this important occasion where we are handing over 2 motor vehicles, 44 motor bikes and 67 bicycles to the Malawi Police Service. This ceremony marks an important milestone in our collective effort to ensure that access to justice for women and children is increased. It also demonstrates the close relationship that exists between the Malawi Police Service and UNICEF.

This relationship has been forged over many years of working together in protecting the most vulnerable members of society. We are happy to have been able to support the Police's efforts to ensure that every woman and child who has had their rights violated receives the protection they deserve. The Victim Support Units of the Malawi Police therefore have been our key allies in ensuring that protection is delivered at community level where most abuses occur.

We have made much progress: to date all 34 District Police Stations have a viable Victim Support Unit manned by specialised police officers who have been trained in child protection and victim support. These officers have also been trained in counselling and play therapy.

After the success of the 34 District Victim Support Units, coverage has been extended to all 8 substations. A further 59 police posts and units have also established Victim Support Units that reach beyond the mainly urban areas that the Stations serve.

Further plans include the establishment of 300 Community Victim Support Units, which will bring victim support services to all Traditional Authorities. In these Community Victim Support Units, community members, including Community Child Protection Workers, Community Policing Forum chairs, teachers, health surveillance assistants, chiefs and civil society representatives will work together to provide support, referrals and access to justice under the close guidance and supervision of the Malawi Police.

The vehicles, motor bikes and bicycles we are handing over today will be distributed to the Police Victims Support Units as a means of increasing the Police's capacity to guide and supervise the Community Victim Support Units. This donation will ensure that specialised police officers from the substations, police posts and units are able to reach out to the Community Victim Support Units in all corners of Malawi. It will ensure that there is adequate follow-up of criminal cases and all child victims of crime and abuse receive counseling where needed.

I wish to thank the Malawi Police Service command, through you Mr. Inspector-General, for your strong commitment to protecting children's rights. In particular, I am proud of the strong relationship UNICEF enjoys with the Department of Community Policing and I am optimistic that this collaboration will continue to grow from strength to strength.

In closing, I wish to underline the obligation that we all hold to ensure that we create a Malawi fit for children: a Malawi in which sustainable human development is founded on principles of democracy, equality, non-discrimination, peace and social justice for all, especially women and children.

I thank you.