

## **SPEECH**

**BY UNICEF DEPUTY RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE, DR. JANE  
MUITA AT THE GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONY FOR A  
TEACHER TRAINING COLLEGE,  
CHIRADZULU**

**20 April 2011**

Your Excellency, Professor Bingu wa Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi,  
Honourable Peter Mutharika, (MP), Minister of Education,

All government officials present

Members of the Press

Ladies and Gentleman

I am delighted to be here today on behalf of UNICEF to speak on what is, yet again, another milestone in our ongoing efforts to improve education in Malawi. We are delighted that today symbolizes the tremendous good that can be achieved when the public and private sectors come together to achieve a common goal for children. What we are witnessing today is the result of a fruitful partnership that began in 2006 with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of

Education, DAPP and UNICEF to construct six teacher-training colleges in Malawi. The college here will be constructed with a grant of US \$1.2 million from Hoffman la Roche of Switzerland who are providing the funds through the Swiss National Committee for UNICEF. Allow me at this stage, Your Excellency, to extend UNICEF's sincere thanks to the employees of La Roche, represented here by Ms. Vivian Beetle, the Head of Corporate Donations and Sponsorship. Through the Roche Employees Action and Charity Trust, Roche employees have worked tirelessly to raise the funds for this college. We in UNICEF will remain forever indebted to them.

Your Excellency, you may wish to know that out of the six colleges planned to be built in Malawi, two are already in full operation; they are located in Chilangoma in Blantyre Rural and Amalika in Thyolo. An additional teacher-training college, funded by the Government of United States of America and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland is currently under construction in Dowa.

Our support to the education sector in Malawi is premised on the strategic priorities the government has outlined in the National Education Sector Plan (NESP). The expansion of capacities for teacher training through infrastructure development is an integral part of the government's priorities. It is within this framework that UNICEF has mobilized resources to construct this college which, at full capacity, will be able to take in 540 students per year. We expect the college to be up and running by September 2013.

Your Excellency, our involvement in construction of colleges is motivated by our desire to see a reduction in the teacher-to-pupil ratio, which at the moment remains quite high. When we look at the 3,000 teachers that graduate from the six government-run colleges and five private colleges every year, the output is simply not enough to meet the shortfall.

In closing, allow me Your Excellency to reiterate UNICEF's continued support to the education sector in Malawi. In particular,

- We will continue to support the government in its efforts to increase the number of qualified teachers, particularly female teachers;
- We will continue to support the in-service teacher training programme at cluster and zonal levels;
- We will support the government to regulate multi-grade teaching and double-shift teaching in its efforts to reduce the teacher-to-pupil ratio;
- UNICEF will also continue to support the government in ensuring that appropriate policies are developed to ensure that the teachers are effectively utilized and retained in the system and are able to improve learning outcomes in the school;
- Finally, we will support the government to integrate the child-friendly schools concept into the pre-service teacher training programme. This will ensure that children learn in schools that (i) promote children's rights and inclusivity of all learners regardless of their backgrounds (ii) produce good examination results

(iii) schools that are safe, protective and health-promoting, (iv) schools that are gender-responsive, and (v) schools that build linkages with the community.

Your Excellency, ladies and gentlemen, I thank you.