A PRESS STATEMENT ON UPWARD ADJUSTMENT OF TUITION FEES IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

1.0 Background

On 27th February 2026, the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Decentralisation, Honourable Joseph Mathyola Mwanamvekha, M.P., delivered the 2026-2027 budget policy statement in the National Assembly of the Republic of Malawi, in which he informed the nation that the Government had allocated resources amounting to K234.3 billion to the country's six (6) public universities. The resources were broken down as follows: K171.97 billion for operations; K45.2 billion for development projects; and K17.1 billion for repayment of Service Gratuity loans. He went further to state that the Government intended that public universities should not predominantly rely on Government subvention; and that, after thorough consultations with various stakeholders, it was determined that students with the capacity to pay would be required to pay cost-reflective fees so that student loan subsidies should only be provided to those who cannot afford.

2.0 Challenges faced by Public Universities

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology recently received a request from public universities, which outlined the challenges the universities were experiencing in training students due to limited available funding. The challenges cited included the persistent funding gap in public universities, estimated at 40-60 percent of the actual cost of training students, which has continued to exert pressure on teaching and learning resources, laboratory and ICT facilities, infrastructure maintenance, student welfare services, research activities, and the overall quality of academic delivery over the past few years.

After a thorough analysis of the full cost of training a student annually for various programmes, the universities submitted three proposed options for the Government's consideration, which included:

1) Full Economic Cost-Recovery Fees as the ideal model, with fees ranging from **K3,058,000** to **K17,560,000** per programme per year;

2) 60% Cost-Recovery Fees as the Compromise Model, with fees ranging from **K1,835,000** to **K10,536,000** per year and;

3) a 100% Increase on Current Fees as the Immediate Relief Model, with fees pegged at **K1,300,000** in all five public universities, while KUHeS fees would be at **K2,000,000**.

Taking into account the prevailing economic conditions, affordability concerns, and the need to safeguard academic quality, Government has approved the third option of the proposal, namely the Immediate Relief Model**,** which is a 100 percent adjustment of the current tuition fees for undergraduate programmes in all public universities. Accordingly, the newly approved tuition fees shall be as follows:

University	Current (MK)	Newly approved (MK)
UNIMA	650,000	1,300,000
LUANAR	650,000	1,300,000
MUST	650,000	1,300,000
MUBAS	650,000	1,300,000
MZUNI	650,000	1,300,000
KUHeS	1,000,000	2,000,000

The revised tuition fees shall take effect from the 2026/2027 Academic Year and be applied in accordance with implementation guidelines to be issued by each institution in consultation with its Council. This adjustment is expected to support improved teaching and learning resources; strengthen laboratory, practical training, and ICT facilities; enhance student welfare and support services; maintain and develop university infrastructure; improve research, innovation, and academic excellence; and the long-term financial sustainability of public universities.

3.0 Justification for the new fee increase

An analysis of the trends in tuition fee increase in public universities in Malawi shows that Government subvention accounts for an average of 60% due to Government's various competing demands for funding. Other sources for financing university education are tuition fees, donations, and a variety of commercial and service-oriented activities. Therefore, tuition fee increase is necessary to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning in public universities is not compromised. Furthermore, the approved tuition fee increase is justified because, over the past few years, there have been irregular fee increases while the cost of teaching and learning materials and facilities has increased. To avoid the reactive and steep fee hikes of the past, which have been disruptive for all stakeholders, the Government has approved the Universities' proposal to apply an annual adjustment of up to 10% to tuition fees in order to keep pace with inflation and the rising cost of inputs, without requiring ad-hoc approvals every year.

4.0 Support for needy students

The Ministry would like to assure the general public that needy students who are likely to be affected by the fee increase will not be disadvantaged by the fee increase. Government is on course to ensure that no needy student is denied access to higher education on account of financial constraints. Government has, therefore, increased funding for supporting needy students under the Higher Education Students' Loans and Grants Board (HESLGB). In addition, the selection process for beneficiaries has been strengthened to ensure that more needy and deserving students access the loans or grants. These students would be assisted from resources that Government had set aside for student loans and upkeep allowances for 38,000 students in public universities, as announced in the SONA by His Excellency the President, Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika.

5.0 Conclusion

Government remains committed to ensuring that public universities are functional and offer good quality education while encouraging universities to diversify ways of generating income for their financial sustainability in the medium to long term.

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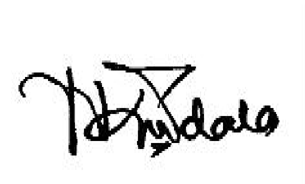

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SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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