



# Speech To Her Excellency, President Joyce Banda

By Eddie Naming'ona  
President of Malawi Washington Association  
Four Seasons Georgetown  
Washington, DC  
June 9, 2012

Your Excellency, Mrs. Joyce Banda, President of the Republic of Malawi  
Your Honor, Chief Justice Richard Banda (retired)  
Honorable Ephraim Mganda Chiume, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation  
Mr. Steve Matenje, Ambassador of the Republic of Malawi to the United States and Members of the Diplomatic Corps and their Spouses  
Members of the Malawian Delegation accompanying Her Excellency  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

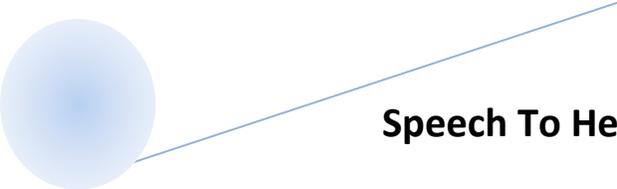
On behalf of the Malawi Washington Association and the Malawian community in the United States, it is indeed the greatest honor that I welcome you, Madame President, to our home away from home. We are grateful that you were able to take time from your busy schedule and kind enough to invite us to this reception where we would get to meet and greet you in such an intimate setting.

Before I proceed, I would like to extend the community's heartfelt condolences to you and our fellow Malawian citizens for the passing of our president, His Excellency Dr. Bingu wa Mutharika. The last time I had the honor to address President Mutharika during his visit here, he had just lost his wife, First Lady Madame Ethel Mutharika. Three weeks ago, tomorrow, you too suffered a personal loss with the passing of your sister, Mrs. Festah Chanthunya. We all know how hard it is to lose a loved one and even more so for someone in your position, a position that does not leave much room for personal grieving. I would like to ask everyone to please stand and observe a moment of silence in honor of our late president, Dr. Bingu wa Mutharika and our president's sister, Mrs. Festah Chanthunya.

SILENCE

Thank you. May their souls indeed rest in eternal peace.

I would be remiss if I did not congratulate you, Madame President, for becoming the first female president in Southern Africa, in general, and Malawi, in particular. In the midst of some of the darkest days Malawi has seen, you have become our ray of light, our beacon of hope. In the last forty eight years, Malawians have seen three presidents take office, all promising to usher in a new era of prosperity and strong democratic values. Malawians have seen those presidents strike blows to the very people they were sworn in to protect and serve. Now we are on to our fourth president, you Madame President, a president who is once again carrying on her shoulders the dreams and hopes of a nation like the presidents before. Many have asked, "What will be different about you, Madame President? Why will you not yet again follow the path the others have taken by embarking on a power consolidation and self enrichment program?" May be you give us this much hope and optimism for the future because you have been there. You have seen it all. You have worked your way up to where you are today. You have been known to listen to the forgotten people in the village who need you probably the most to craft policies that will empower and enrich their lives. Policies that will deal with justice and equal rights, fair taxation, fair customs and exercise duty, education, security. The list goes on and on. May be we are optimistic because you are a mother, a mother who understands what it takes to raise a future



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generation. Through The Joyce Banda Foundation International and The National Association of Business Women (NABW), you have taken on initiatives to empower Malawians at the grassroots level. As we have affectionately called you, you are a true mandasi woman. Now that you have been entrusted with the future of Malawi, we pray that you do not forget what led you to this path, what inspired you to start these initiatives on your dining table and watch them spread across Malawi. Now imagine what you can achieve at this point in time with a nation behind you, hungering for honest leadership and ready to be led.

We know you have one of toughest jobs in the world to do to uplift our nation and we pray that you remain steadfast, continue appointing the best people in positions of leadership, continue the fight against corruption and continue putting in place policies that will be carried on long after you have left office. You have seen the failures of those gone before you. You have the opportunity to set the stage for future politicians where they can ran for office and claim, "Vote for me because I am a Joyce Banda democrat" and the people will instantaneously know what that means because they had witnessed a trail blazer change the nation's landscape for the better and that trail blazer is you, Madame President. This is your time, please make it count.

Malawians in the Diaspora welcome your recent creation of the Malawian Diaspora Office in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We have for decades not had a venue where we could contribute ideas and know that they will be heard. For the past few years, the Malawi Washington Association, together with other Malawian organizations across the globe, have tried to advance a cause dearer to the Diaspora and for the benefit of Malawi, and that is Dual Citizenship. Even though we have not reached a stage to officially submit this proposal through the right channels and eventually to you, we hope that the Malawian Diaspora Office will be helpful in crafting a bill that will address this current lack of dual citizenship, an advantage that countries such as the United States and Israel have utilized to get the best out of its patriots spread across globe. We hope this office is an answer to many of our prayers.

Your Excellency, I am limited to but a few minutes otherwise the list of items this community wanted me to include in my welcoming remarks, would have kept me talking endlessly adding more hours to your jetlag. We realize kuti mutu umodzi susenza denga. There are many resourceful people in this room and beyond that are ready and willing to help mother Malawi achieve her glory. Your Excellency, we are at your service. We are encouraged by the budget recently introduced and the efforts you have shown in the short time you have been in office and ask you to continue to fight for the people of Malawi.

Once again I am deeply humbled to have this opportunity of addressing you, your Excellency, on behalf of the Malawi Washington Association and this wonderful, wonderful community. May you have a safe journey back home and may your dreams for Malawi come true.

Zikomo kwambiri and God Bless Malawi.