



**REPUBLIC OF MALAWI**  
**MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS**  
**HUMAN RIGHTS SECTION**

**STATEMENT AT THE OPENING OF THE 65<sup>TH</sup> SESSION**  
**OF THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON BEHALF OF**  
**MEMBER STATES OF THE AFRICAN UNION**

,

**BANJUL, THE GAMBIA**

**BY PACHARO KAYIRA**  
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**The Vice President of the Republic of The Gambia, Dr. Isatou Touray, the Chairperson of the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights Hon. Soyata Maiga, All Protocols observed.**

**Theme: THE TIME HAS FOUND US**

Malawi is honoured and humbled to speak on behalf of state parties at this 65<sup>th</sup> Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights here in Banjul, The Gambia.

Our founding fathers and mothers had a grand vision for this continent. Sixty or so years after the birth of independent Africa, we as a people have made great strides. We have faltered along the way and encountered many valleys and mountains. These difficulties should not wear us out but rather embolden us to soldier on.

Africa is largely independent. The wars against colonialism and apartheid were won. Kwame Nkrumah said: **“Seek ye first a political kingdom and the rest will be added unto it.”** Africa has attained the political kingdom. The question is: Has the rest been added unto it?

The vision of the Nkurumahs, the Nyereres, Kamuzu Bandas, Nelson Mandelas was that of not only a politically

independent Africa but an economically free Africa, free from poverty, disease and neo colonialism. In other words, a prosperous Africa. So, ladies and gentlemen, we ask ourselves, where are we? Our people still face abject poverty, wars and oppression. Our dream of realising the vision of our founders is now well captured in Agenda 2063. It is an ambitious project which will require focus, steadfastness and sacrifice. It is a challenge we should be relishing to take.

However, the challenge is not for the faint hearted or the summer soldiers or the sunshine patriots. It is for those willing to pay for the price as pan Africanists.

We would like to congratulate the countries whose reports will be reviewed at this session and we wish them well.

Turning to my beloved country, Malawi, Hon Vice President and madam Chairperson, in May this year, we held Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government elections. The incumbent president, Prof. Arthur Peter Mutharika was declared winner of the presidential elections. However, two opposition parties are challenging the results in our High Court and judgment is expected later this year.

Since the elections, some Malawians have been holding demonstrations agitating for the resignation of the chairperson of the Malawi Electoral Commission. Sadly, these demonstrations have resulted in loss of life and destruction of property. We affirm our belief that our people have the right to demonstrate and express themselves. At the same time we emphasize that the pursuit of democratic rights places a high level of responsibility. It is our call therefore, that the law should be respected and the rights of others respected as well.

We believe that our constitutional framework, our collective wisdom, our shared past and our common dreams are enough to guide Malawi through these choppy waters.

We have completed our report on the African Charter and the Protocol and we will submit it within this session.

In conclusion Hon Vice President, Madam Chairperson and distinguished guests, the time has found us to decide what kind of Africa we want to leave for our children and grandchildren. The bible says: "*A good person leaves an inheritance for his grandchildren.*" Let us endeavour to leave a glorious Africa as an inheritance for our grandchildren.

Three scores and more years ago, the likes of the Nkrumah peeped into the future. They saw us free from domination, free from wars, prosperous and democratic. This has not been fully attained, but we have an opportunity to work towards its attainment.

Let me close by quoting **Johnny Clegg** recently departed on our shared destiny as Africans in the song Scatterlings of Africa:

**I love the scatterings of Africa, each and every one,  
in their hearts a burning hunger, beneath the copper sun.**

**-Ancient bones from Olduvai**

**Echoes of the very first cry,**

**who made me here and why, beneath the copper sun.**

**African Idea**

**African Idea**

**Make the future clear**

**Make the future clear**

**And we are the scatterings of Africa, Both you and I**

**we are on the road to Phelamanga, beneath the copper sky”**

Hon Vice President, Madam Chairperson, distinguished delegates,

Thank you for listening.

**God bless Africa!**