

The EU approves six programmes to contribute to Malawi's development

Today, the European Union approves a package of six strategic programmes to the total amount of € 161 million in favour of Malawi as its 2010 Annual Action Programme under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF). The funding will notably support the road sector and rural infrastructure development and will more generally assist the Malawi government in its efforts to reduce poverty through the promotion of economic growth.

"Malawi is categorised as a least-developed country but has recorded high levels of economic growth in recent years. Today's adopted EU support builds on the good to excellent results that external evaluation and monitoring exercises have attributed to EU development cooperation with Malawi. These programmes will make a significant contribution to the development of Malawi", said Ambassador Alexander Baum, Head of the EU Delegation to Malawi.

More specifically, today's EU funding will support six strategic programmes. Firstly, the *Road Sector Budget Support Programme* of € 70 million will support sustainable and cost-efficient transport links from farm and factory gate to market centres and across borders to international trading partners. Through the provision of all-weather rural feeder roads, the programme is expected to improve rural accessibility to agricultural production areas and markets, especially for isolated local communities.

Secondly, the *Rural Infrastructure Development Programme* of € 32 million will promote productive activities at community level in the fifteen poorest districts of Malawi, for example through the improvement of feeder roads and bridges, and through the construction of irrigation schemes and reforestation activities.

Thirdly, the *Democratic Governance Programme* of € 30 million will improve democratic governance, including access to quality justice, greater participation of all Malawians in democratic decision-making, and better democratic accountability.

The fourth programme adopted today, the *Malawi Gender Programme* of € 12 million, will contribute to improve gender equality and equity as a goal in itself (as being human rights matters) and as a mean to reduce HIV/AIDS and poverty.

Fifthly, the *Capacity-Building towards Trade and Private Sector Development Programme* of € 12 million will promote exports and diversification of Malawi's economy, including its mineral sector.

Finally, the *Technical Cooperation Facility III* of € 5 million will support sound development programmes financed from EDF funds and other EU-funded initiatives in Malawi, including joint actions with other donors.

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