Hunger and Nutrition Commitment Index (HANCI) 2013

Key data for Malawi

HANCI compares 45 developing countries for their performance on 22 indicators of political commitment to reduce hunger and undernutrition. All the countries compared in the index have high rates of hunger and undernutrition. The comparative approach of the index means that country scores are calculated in relation to the political commitment of the other countries in the index.

**Strong Performance**

- Malawi is one of the few countries which meets its commitments agreed within the African Union’s Maputo Declaration, to spend over 10% of public expenditure on agriculture (28.9%).
- Malawi invests substantially in its health sector, which receives 18.5% of public expenditure.
- The Government promotes complementary feeding practices and 96% of children aged 6–59 months received 2 high doses of vitamin A supplements in 2011.
- 94.7% of women aged 15–49 were attended at least once during pregnancy by skilled health personnel.
- Nutrition is a priority area in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy, and a range of nutrition-focused policies have been put in place in the past eight years with clear time-bound targets.
- Malawi has instituted a separate budget line for nutrition, improving public oversight and accountability for spending.
- The National Nutrition Policy and Strategic Plan set out time bound nutrition targets and set up an intersectoral coordinating body (National Nutrition Committee).
- Regular (once every three years) nutrition surveys have enabled policymakers’ access to up to date information.
- Nutrition is increasingly integrated in key sectoral policies and has received high-level political endorsement; the Department of Nutrition, HIV and AIDS, which implements the National Nutrition Policy and Strategic Plan, is situated in the Office of the President and Cabinet.

**Areas for improvement**

- The constitution of Malawi enshrines a non-justiciable right to food and the right to social security. Some of these rights exist on paper but are not effectively enforced. Discrimination against women reduces their access to, and ownership of farmland increasing their vulnerability to hunger and undernutrition.
- People’s access to improved sanitation (52.9%) is high compared to some of Malawi’s neighbours; nevertheless, there is substantial scope for improvement.
- Institutional, legal and market frameworks for accessing land have been put in place, however they do not always help poor rural households gain secure land tenure. Moreover, agricultural research and extension services do not always effectively reach poor farmers.
- Social protection programmes are basic, largely donor funded, and do not yet cover key potential beneficiary groups with adequate support, to mitigate extreme poverty and hunger.
- There is substantial scope for improving the coverage of Malawi’s civil registration system. Only 16.6% of live births are registered. This potentially limits children from gaining access to basic services, including health and education, as this may be dependent on proof of legal identity.
### Hunger Reduction Commitment Index (HRCI)

**Public spending**
- Public spending on agriculture as share of total public spending: 28.9% in 2010 (Joint 1st)
- Public spending on health as share of total public spending: 18.5% in 2011 (3rd)

**Policies**
- Access to land (security of tenure): Moderate in 2012 (Joint 17th)
- Access to agricultural research and extension services: Moderate in 2011 (Joint 25th)
- Civil registration system — coverage of live births: 16.6% in 2008 (41st)
- Functioning of social protection systems: Weak in 2012 (24th)

**Laws**
- Level of constitutional protection: Strong in 2011 (Joint 1st)
- Equality of women’s access to agricultural land: In Law, not in Practice in 2012 (6th)
- Equality of women’s economic rights: In Law, not in Practice in 2011 (5th)
- Constitution recognises the right to social security: Yes in 2006 (Joint 1st)

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### Nutrition Commitment Index (NCI)

**Public spending**
- Separate budget for nutrition: Yes in 2012 (Joint 1st)

**Policies**
- Vitamin A supplementation coverage for children: 96.0% in 2011 (12th)
- Government promotes complementary feeding: Yes in 2012 (Joint 1st)
- Population with access to an improved water source: 83.7% in 2011 (15th)
- Population with access to improved sanitation: 52.9% in 2011 (16th)
- Health care visits for pregnant women: 94.7% in 2010 (8th)
- Nutrition features in national development policies: Strong in 2013 (Joint 1st)
- National nutrition plan: Yes in 2013 (Joint 1st)
- Multi—sector and multi—stakeholder coordination: Yes in 2012 (Joint 1st)
- Time bound nutrition targets: Yes in 2012 (Joint 1st)
- National nutrition survey in last 3 years: Yes in 2013 (Joint 1st)

**Laws**

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1. Upper benchmark for agriculture spending and health spending are Maputo and Abuja pledges, respectively.
2. Possible scores are: Very Weak, Weak, Moderate, Strong, Very Strong.
3. Possible scores are: Weak, Moderate, Strong.
4. Possible scores are: Not in Law, In Law Not in Practice, In Law & Practice.

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For full details visit: [www.hancindex.org](http://www.hancindex.org)