



**ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY
DR. LAZARUS MCCARTHY CHAKWERA,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI**

My Fellow Citizens,

To stand before you as your President today is an honor.

It's an honor that fills me with unspeakable joy and immense gratitude.

It's an honor forged in the furnace of your desire and demand for change.

It's an honor crafted by your hand when you braved the winter chill to cast your vote.

It's an honor that has reignited the dream of our nation's founders for a New Malawi.

When the founders of Malawi emerged from the womb of the great struggle that birthed our Independence in 1964, the dream was not merely for us to be freed from oppression. And when their children marched against the one-party state to birth our Democracy in 1993, the dream was not merely for us to be freed from tyranny.

The dream that binds us together is for us to enjoy shared prosperity, not just freedom. For of what use is freedom from oppression if you are a slave to starvation? Or freedom from colonialism if you are a slave to tribalism? Of what use is freedom from tyranny if you are a slave to poverty?

No! The dream was for all of us, together, to be the ones who enjoy the riches of Malawi's soil; to be the ones who make the products of her industries; to be the ones who harvest the bounties of her fields; to be the ones who are served by her taxes; and to be the ones who raise the skylines of her cities.

Today, we too have emerged from great struggle and marched our sore feet towards this moment of victory and justice. But unlike our forebears, we have done so not just because we have a dream. We have done so because the time has come for us to go beyond dreaming. The time has come for us to arise from the slumber of our dream and make the dream true.

Dr. Chilima and I accept this challenge and task. We will pursue it, not just as servants accountable to you voters, but as stewards of the hopes of millions of children, born and unborn, who have no vote. With your help, we will restore a new generation's faith in the possibility of having a government that serves, not a government that rules; a government that inspires, not a government that infuriates; a government that listens, not a government that shouts; a government that fights for you, not against you.

Now, I am no stranger to the benefits of good government. Although I was raised in a poor village like most Malawians; raised without inherited riches or political connections like most Malawians; raised without electricity or running water like most Malawians; I stand here today because I had one of the blessings of God that young Malawians today do not: *The blessing of growing up in a well-governed Malawi.*

So I pledge to run Malawi well, for that is the surest path to Tsogolo Labwino, a path that has long been in ruins, riddled with the potholes of greed and corruption. In making this pledge, I am accepting this call to serve you with joy and holy fear, for I am duty bound to God and all of you to give it my best.

However, I know that there are many of you who did not vote for me in this election, and perhaps the prospect of my presidency fills you with fear and grief. But I want you to remember one thing: This new Malawi is a home for you too, and so long as I am its President, it will be a home in which you too will prosper. I only ask you for one thing in return: To give Dr. Chilima and I a chance to earn your trust and make this win a win for all of us. That is how we will fulfil the dream of Malawi Watsopano Okomela...TONSE. God bless you and God bless Malawi.