

### 1.0. PREAMBLE:

NGOGCN is a network of 51 NGOs working across five thematic areas namely Gender Based Violence (GBV), Gender Related Laws (GRL), Child Rights (CR), Agriculture and Economic Empowerment of Women (AEEW), and Women in Politics and Decision Making. Working in partnership with the National Democratic Institute (NDI) through a project supported by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), the network is promoting responsiveness to women's concerns in development processes in local government. The project is targeting nine councils: Chiradzulu, Dedza, Lilongwe, Luchenza, Karonga, Mzimba, Mzuzu, Neno and Thyolo. In September 2016, NGOGCN undertook a rapid assessment to review progress on the inclusion of women's needs in development planning, budgeting and financing as well as women's representation and participation in decision-making positions in sub district structures, with a focus on Area Development Committees (ADCs).

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Councils

### 3.0. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS:

The table below summarises the key findings in the key areas of focus for the rapid assessment:  
**Legend: Red (very minimal progress and it's a concern) Yellow: (Some progress but requires improvement) Green (Progress toward inclusiveness of women and girls)**

### 2.0. METHODOLOGY:

The rapid assessment employed a desk review of planning documents at the council, including the District Development Plans (DDPs) and council budgets. In the aforementioned councils, interface meetings were also conducted targeting council officials, ADC and Village Development Committees (VDC) representatives, members of NDI partner Social Accountability Clubs (SACs), Transparency and Accountability Clubs (TACs), councilors, and representatives of youth and persons with disabilities. A score card tool was also developed and used to examine the progress. The score card focused on the following: development planning consideration given women and girls needs when deciding on development projects; critically looking at whether these needs inform planning processes that culminate into District Development Plans (DDPs) and any other plans or priorities set by the district council; planning projects and reviewing those that have been actually implemented; making budget and financing commitments to ensure financial resources are allocated towards development interventions aligned to addressing women and girls' needs, trends and how much is being allocated towards development projects that respond to their needs; generating a picture on women's representation and participation in ADCs' leadership structures.



AREA OF FOCUS	NAME OF COUNCIL								
	Chiradzulu	Dedza	Lilongwe	Lucheza	Karonga	Mzimba	Mzuzu	Neno	Thyolo
Development planning	DDP is responsive of women and girls. Implementation is broad and not responsive to identified needs of women and girls.	Women's and girls needs are present in the the DDP and several projects implemented address women-specific needs. However a majority of projects do not sufficiently take into account women and girls needs.	DDP takes into account women and girls needs however development projects implemented do not respond to the identified needs of women and girls.	Urban development plan (2013-2018) highlights issues. Implementation has minimal gender responsiveness.	The DDP acknowledges women's needs. Some projects considerably address those needs.	The DDP recognizes needs of women and girls however gender-responsiveness is not comprehensive enough.	Needs of women and girls feature in the 2012-2017 development plan and Socio Economic Profile but project implementation is not responsive to the needs identified in the plan.	District social economic profile & DDP takes into account needs of women and girls. Limited gender responsive implementation noticeable.	Projects implemented are broad though women's & girls' issues are highlighted.
Budget and financing	Data not made available.	Most projects under 2015/2016 budget of MK137 million was addressing specific women needs.	Data not made available.	Data not made available.	Budgetary allocation towards women's specific gender projects from 30% in 2014/2015 to 45% in 2015/2016 budgets	Data not made available.	Data not made available.	Projects implemented are broad however women's & girls' issues are featured.	Budget data was broad. Allocations are for operations. Other funds (e.g. LDF) projects address women & girls needs.
Women's representation (ADCs and leadership)	24%	36%	27%	37%	32%	32%	20 %	30 %	33%
Overall status of progress									

### 4.0. KEY OBSERVATIONS:

- District Development Plans have expired in Chiradzulu, Dedza, Lilongwe, Mzimba and Thyolo District Development Plans expired and there is great need to develop new ones that are inclusive.
- There is a lack of women-specific indicators related to project success and effectiveness, and minimal monitoring to ensure responsiveness of projects being prioritised and implemented.
- Access to information is a challenge. Though prior arrangements were made to access council budget data, in five districts this information was not provided.
- There is low representation of women in ADCs - not more than 37 percent. This is exclusive of women and their women's right to contribute to development decision-making.
- There are limited mechanisms to monitor compliance either from national government or within the council secretariat on responsiveness to women and girls.



### 5.0. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- District councils should ensure participatory and responsive formulation of the new DDPs by explicitly addressing gender-specific needs in a practical and strategic manner.
- District councils must undertake participatory and gender-responsive budgeting to ensure equitable allocation of resources.
- District councils must improve information sharing to enable ease of access to information related to development projects. Use of notice boards to share information is encouraged.
- Monitoring and evaluation should be undertaken to ensure tracking of progress specifically as it relates to addressing women and girls' needs. Additionally, gender-based Public Expenditure Tracking (PET) must be continued to ensure gender needs are integrated equally in development processes and projects implemented by district councils.
- The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) must enforce local government guidelines on women's representation to ensure more women are included in ADCs including decision-making positions.
- The National Local Government Finance Committee (NLGFC) should analyse and approve budget estimates for councils based on Gender Responsive Budgeting guidelines as per the Ministry of Finance's budget guidelines circular.
- District councils' budget and finance committees of districts councils must be empowered to support monitoring and compliance to gender responsive budgeting, gender-based PET and planning for all processes at the council.

### 6.0. CONCLUSION:

It is commendable that the Government of Malawi has committed to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment being party to various instruments that promote this efforts. The Gender Equality Act of 2013 has provisions on enhancement of the participation of women in politics and public life no less than 40% and no more than 60% of either sex. However from the analysis undertaken by NGOGCN, it must be noted that the extent to which the GEA 2013 has been implemented and enforced so far is unsatisfactory. There is great need for councils to implement concrete interventions and programmes that are relevant to the needs of women and girls. Opportunities are available in view of expired DDPs or to revise DDPs. Overall DDPs need to be inclusive of women and girls and assist in advancing gender equality and women empowerment. In the meantime, continued tracking of progress is critical. Moving forward, it is envisaged that this rapid assessment be scaled up into a national study to provide more detailed analysis in the areas of development planning, budgeting and financing in addition to women's representation at district level.