



Africa :: Malawi

Introduction :: Malawi

Background:

Established in 1891, the British protectorate of Nyasaland became the independent nation of Malawi in 1964. After three decades of one-party rule under President Hastings Kamuzu BANDA the country held multiparty elections in 1994, under a provisional constitution that came into full effect the following year. President Bingu wa MUTHARIKA, elected in May 2004 after a failed attempt by the previous president to amend the constitution to permit another term, struggled to assert his authority against his predecessor and subsequently started his own party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in 2005. MUTHARIKA was reelected to a second term in May 2009. As president, he oversaw some economic improvement in his first term, but was accused of economic mismanagement and poor governance in his second term. He died abruptly in April 2012 and was succeeded by his vice president, Joyce BANDA. Population growth, increasing pressure on agricultural lands, corruption, and the spread of HIV/AIDS pose major problems for Malawi.

Geography :: Malawi

Location:
Southern Africa, east of Zambia, west and north of Mozambique

Geographic coordinates:
13 30 S, 34 00 E

Map references:
Africa

Area:
total: 118,484 sq km
country comparison to the world: 100
land: 94,080 sq km
water: 24,404 sq km

Area - comparative:
slightly smaller than Pennsylvania

Land boundaries:
total: 2,881 km
border countries: Mozambique 1,569 km, Tanzania 475 km, Zambia 837 km

Coastline:
0 km (landlocked)

Maritime claims:
none (landlocked)

Climate:
sub-tropical; rainy season (November to May); dry season (May to November)

Terrain:
narrow elongated plateau with rolling plains, rounded hills, some mountains

Elevation extremes:
lowest point: junction of the Shire River and international boundary with Mozambique 37 m
highest point: Sapitwa (Mount Mlanje) 3,002 m

Natural resources:
limestone, arable land, hydropower, unexploited deposits of uranium, coal, and bauxite
Land use:
arable land: 30.38%
permanent crops: 1.1%
other: 68.52% (2011)
Irrigated land:
735 sq km (2006)
Total renewable water resources:
17.28 cu km (2011)
Freshwater withdrawal (domestic/industrial/agricultural):
total: 1.36 cu km/yr (11%/4%/86%)
per capita: 99.86 cu m/yr (2005)
Natural hazards:
NA
Environment - current issues:
deforestation; land degradation; water pollution from agricultural runoff, sewage, industrial wastes; siltation of spawning grounds endangers fish populations
Environment - international agreements:
party to: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Environmental Modification, Hazardous Wastes, Marine Life Conservation, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Wetlands
signed, but not ratified: Law of the Sea
Geography - note:
landlocked; Lake Nyasa, some 580 km long, is the country's most prominent physical feature; it contains more fish species than any other lake on earth

People and Society:: **Malawi**

Nationality:
noun: Malawian(s)
adjective: Malawian
Ethnic groups:
Chewa 32.6%, Lomwe 17.6%, Yao 13.5%, Ngoni 11.5%, Tumbuka 8.8%, Nyanja 5.8%, Sena 3.6%, Tonga 2.1%, Ngonde 1%, other 3.5%
Languages:
Chichewa (official) 57.2%, Chinyanja 12.8%, Chiyao 10.1%, Chitumbuka 9.5%, Chisena 2.7%, Chilomwe 2.4%, Chitonga 1.7%, other 3.6% (1998 census)
Religions:
Christian 82.7%, Muslim 13%, other 1.9%, none 2.5% (1998 census)
Population:
16,777,547 (July 2013 est.)
country comparison to the world: 66
note: estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality, higher death rates, lower population growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected
Age structure:
0-14 years: 44.7% (male 3,754,206/female 3,738,521)
15-24 years: 20.6% (male 1,723,098/female 1,725,326)
25-54 years: 28.5% (male 2,422,642/female 2,364,137)
55-64 years: 3.6% (male 269,058/female 327,158)
65 years and over: 2.7% (male 192,928/female 260,473) (2013 est.)
Dependency ratios:
total dependency ratio: 94.1 %
youth dependency ratio: 87.9 %
elderly dependency ratio: 6.2 %
potential support ratio: 16.1 (2013)
Median age:
total: 17.3 years
male: 17.2 years
female: 17.4 years (2013 est.)
Population growth rate:
2.74% (2013 est.)
country comparison to the world: 20
Birth rate:
39.98 births/1,000 population (2013 est.)
country comparison to the world: 8
Death rate:

12.54 deaths/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 26

Net migration rate:

0 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 97

Urbanization:

urban population: 15.7% of total population (2011)

rate of urbanization: 4.2% annual rate of change (2010-15 est.)

Major urban areas - population:

Blantyre 856,000; LILONGWE (capital) 821,000 (2009)

Sex ratio:

at birth: 1.02 male(s)/female

0-14 years: 1 male(s)/female

15-24 years: 1 male(s)/female

25-54 years: 1.02 male(s)/female

55-64 years: 0.82 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 0.75 male(s)/female

total population: 0.99 male(s)/female (2013 est.)

Mother's mean age at first birth:

18.9

note: Median age at first birth among women 25-29 (2010 est.)

Maternal mortality rate:

460 deaths/100,000 live births (2010)

country comparison to the world: 24

Infant mortality rate:

total: 76.98 deaths/1,000 live births

country comparison to the world: 10

male: 80.99 deaths/1,000 live births

female: 72.91 deaths/1,000 live births (2013 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 52.78 years

country comparison to the world: 210

male: 51.95 years

female: 53.62 years (2013 est.)

Total fertility rate:

5.26 children born/woman (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 15

Contraceptive prevalence rate:

46.1% (2010)

Health expenditures:

6.6% of GDP (2010)

country comparison to the world: 97

Physicians density:

0.02 physicians/1,000 population (2008)

Hospital bed density:

1.3 beds/1,000 population (2011)

Drinking water source:

improved:

urban: 95% of population

rural: 80% of population

total: 83% of population

unimproved:

urban: 5% of population

rural: 20% of population

total: 17% of population (2010 est.)

Sanitation facility access:

improved:

urban: 49% of population

rural: 51% of population

total: 51% of population

unimproved:

urban: 51% of population

rural: 49% of population

total: 49% of population (2010 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:

11% (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 9

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:

920,000 (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 12

HIV/AIDS - deaths:

51,000 (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 9

Major infectious diseases:

degree of risk: very high

food or waterborne diseases: bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever

vectorborne diseases: malaria and dengue fever

water contact disease: schistosomiasis

animal contact disease: rabies (2013)

Obesity - adult prevalence rate:

4.3% (2008)

country comparison to the world: 168

Children under the age of 5 years underweight:

13.8% (2010)

country comparison to the world: 55

Education expenditures:

5.4% of GDP (2011)

country comparison to the world: 57

Literacy:

definition: age 15 and over can read and write

total population: 74.8%

male: 81.1%

female: 68.5% (2010 est.)

School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education):

total: 11 years

male: 11 years

female: 11 years (2011)

Child labor - children ages 5-14:

total number: 993,318

percentage: 26 % (2006 est.)

Government:: **Malawi**

Country name:

conventional long form: Republic of Malawi

conventional short form: Malawi

local long form: Dziko la Malawi

local short form: Malawi

former: British Central African Protectorate, Nyasaland Protectorate, Nyasaland

Government type:

multiparty democracy

Capital:

name: Lilongwe

geographic coordinates: 13 58 S, 33 47 E

time difference: UTC+2 (7 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

Administrative divisions:

28 districts; Balaka, Blantyre, Chikwawa, Chiradzulu, Chitipa, Dedza, Dowa, Karonga, Kasungu, Likoma, Lilongwe, Machinga, Mangochi, Mchinji, Mulanje, Mwanza, Mzimba, Neno, Ntcheu, Nkhata Bay, Nkhotakota, Nsanje, Ntchisi, Phalombe, Rumphi, Salima, Thyolo, Zomba

Independence:

6 July 1964 (from the UK)

National holiday:

Independence Day (Republic Day), 6 July (1964)

Constitution:

18 May 1994

Legal system:

mixed legal system of English common law and customary law; judicial review of legislative acts in the Supreme Court of Appeal

International law organization participation:

accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction with reservations; accepts ICCt jurisdiction

Suffrage:

18 years of age; universal

Executive branch:

chief of state: President Joyce BANDA (since 7 April 2012); Vice President Khumbo Hastings KACHALI (since 11 April 2012); note - the president is both the chief of state and head of government; former President Bingu wa MUTHARIKA died on 5 April 2012, Vice President Joyce BANDA was subsequently sworn in on 7 April 2012

head of government: President Joyce BANDA (since 7 April 2012); Vice President Khumbo Hastings KACHALI (since 11 April 2012)

cabinet: 36-member Cabinet named by the president
(For more information visit the **World Leaders website** [☞](#))

elections: president elected by popular vote for a five-year term (eligible for a second term); election last held on 19 May 2009 (next to be held in May 2014)

election results: Bingu wa MUTHARIKA elected president; percent of vote - Bingu wa MUTHARIKA 66%, John TEMBO 30.7%, other 3.3%; note - MUTHARIKA passed away on 5 April 2012 and was succeeded by then vice president Joyce BANDA

Legislative branch:

unicameral National Assembly (193 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms)

elections: last held on 19 May 2009 (next to be held in May 2014)

election results: percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - DPP 114, MCP 26, UDF 17, independents 32, other 4

Judicial branch:

highest court(s): Supreme Court of Appeal (consists of the chief justice and at least 3 judges)

judge selection and term of office: Supreme Court chief justice appointed by the president and confirmed by the National Assembly; other judges appointed by the president upon recommendation of the Judicial Service Commission, which regulates judicial officers; judges serve until age 65

subordinate courts: High Court; magistrate courts; Industrial Relations Court; district and city traditional or local courts

Political parties and leaders:

Alliance for Democracy or AFORD [Godfrey SHAWA]

Democratic Progressive Party or DPP [Peter MUTHARIKA]

Malawi Congress Party or MCP [John TEMBO]

Malawi Democratic Party or MDP [Kampelo KALUA]

Malawi Forum for Unity and Development or MAFUNDE [George MNESA]

New Labour Party or NLP [Friday JUMBE]

New Republican Party [Gwanda CHAKUWAMBA]

People's Party or PP [Joyce BANDA]

People's Progressive Movement or PPM [Mark Katsonga PHIRI]

People's Transformation Movement or PETRA [Kamuzu CHIBAMBO]

United Democratic Front or UDF [Atupele MULUZI]

Political pressure groups and leaders:

Council for NGOs in Malawi or CONGOMA (human rights, democracy, and development)

Human Rights Consultative Committee or HRCC (human rights)

Malawi Economic Justice Network or MEJN (pro economic growth, development, government accountability)

Malawi Law Society (an umbrella organization of all lawyers in Malawi)

Public Affairs Committee or PAC (promotes democracy, development, peace and unity)

International organization participation:

ACP, AfDB, AU, C, CD, COMESA, FAO, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, IPU, ISO (correspondent), ITSO, ITU, ITUC (NGOs), MIGA, MINURSO, MONUSCO, NAM, OPCW, SADC, UN, UNAMID, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNOCI, UNWTO, UPU, WCO, WFTU (NGOs), WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

Diplomatic representation in the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador Stephen D. Tennyson MATENJE

chancery: 2408 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008

telephone: [1] (202) 721-0270

FAX: [1] (202) 721-0288

Diplomatic representation from the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador Jeanine E. JACKSON

embassy: 16 Jomo Kenyatta Road, Lilongwe 3

mailing address: P. O. Box 30016, Lilongwe 3, Malawi

telephone: [265] (1) 773-166

FAX: [265] (1) 770-471

Flag description:

three equal horizontal bands of black (top), red, and green with a radiant, rising, red sun centered on the black band; black represents the native peoples, red the blood shed in their struggle for freedom, and green the color of nature; the rising sun represents the hope of freedom for the continent of Africa

National anthem:

name: "Mulungu dalitsa Malawi" (Oh God Bless Our Land of Malawi)

 [PLAY ANTHEM](#)

lyrics/music: Michael-Fredrick Paul SAUKA

note: adopted 1964

Economy - overview:

Landlocked Malawi ranks among the world's most densely populated and least developed countries. The economy is predominately agricultural with about 80% of the population living in rural areas. Agriculture, which has benefited from fertilizer subsidies since 2006, accounts for one-third of GDP and 90% of export revenues. The performance of the tobacco sector is key to short-term growth as tobacco accounts for more than half of exports. The economy depends on substantial inflows of economic assistance from the IMF, the World Bank, and individual donor nations. In 2006, Malawi was approved for relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) program. In December 2007, the US granted Malawi eligibility status to receive financial support within the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) initiative. The government faces many challenges including developing a market economy, improving educational facilities, facing up to environmental problems, dealing with the rapidly growing problem of HIV/AIDS, and satisfying foreign donors that fiscal discipline is being tightened. Since 2005 President BANDA'S government has exhibited improved financial discipline under the guidance of Finance Minister Goodall GONDWE and signed a three year Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility worth \$56 million with the IMF. The government has announced infrastructure projects that could yield improvements, such as a new oil pipeline for better fuel access, and the potential for a waterway link through Mozambican rivers to the ocean for better transportation options. Since 2009, however, Malawi has experienced some setbacks, including a general shortage of foreign exchange, which has damaged its ability to pay for imports, and fuel shortages that hinder transportation and productivity. Investment fell 23% in 2009, and continued to decline in 2010. The government has failed to address barriers to investment such as unreliable power, water shortages, poor telecommunications infrastructure, and the high costs of services. Donors, who provided an average of 36% of government revenue in the past five years, suspended general budget support for Malawi in 2011 due to a negative IMF review and governance issues.

GDP (purchasing power parity):

\$14.5 billion (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 142

\$14.23 billion (2011 est.)

\$13.64 billion (2010 est.)

note: data are in 2012 US dollars

GDP (official exchange rate):

\$4.212 billion (2012 est.)

GDP - real growth rate:

1.9% (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 139

4.3% (2011 est.)

6.5% (2010 est.)

GDP - per capita (PPP):

\$900 (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 220

\$900 (2011 est.)

\$900 (2010 est.)

note: data are in 2012 US dollars

Gross national saving:

7.5% of GDP (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 136

9.7% of GDP (2011 est.)

15.8% of GDP (2010 est.)

GDP - composition, by end use:

household consumption: 74.2%

government consumption: 20.5%

investment in fixed capital: 13.3%

investment in inventories: 2%

exports of goods and services: 28.5%

imports of goods and services: -38.5%
(2012 est.)

GDP - composition, by sector of origin:

agriculture: 29%

industry: 19.2%

services: 51.8% (2012 est.)

Agriculture - products:

tobacco, sugarcane, cotton, tea, corn, potatoes, cassava (tapioca), sorghum, pulses, groundnuts, Macadamia nuts; cattle, goats

Industries:

tobacco, tea, sugar, sawmill products, cement, consumer goods

Industrial production growth rate:

0.7% (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 124

Labor force:

5.747 million (2007 est.)

country comparison to the world: 69

Labor force - by occupation:

agriculture: 90%
industry and services: 10% (2003 est.)

Unemployment rate:
NA%

Population below poverty line:
53% (2004)

Household income or consumption by percentage share:
lowest 10%: 3%
highest 10%: 31.9% (2004)

Distribution of family income - Gini index:
39 (2004)

country comparison to the world: 70

Budget:
revenues: \$1.032 billion
expenditures: \$1.358 billion (2012 est.)

Taxes and other revenues:
24.5% of GDP (2012 est.)
country comparison to the world: 129

Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):
-7.7% of GDP (2012 est.)
country comparison to the world: 192

Public debt:
61.4% of GDP (2012 est.)
country comparison to the world: 45
40.7% of GDP (2011 est.)

Fiscal year:
1 July - 30 June

Inflation rate (consumer prices):
21.4% (2012 est.)
country comparison to the world: 217
7.6% (2011 est.)

Central bank discount rate:
15% (31 December 2009)
country comparison to the world: 9
15% (31 December 2008)

Commercial bank prime lending rate:
32.4% (31 December 2012 est.)
country comparison to the world: 13
23.8% (31 December 2011 est.)

Stock of narrow money:
\$457.6 million (31 December 2012 est.)
country comparison to the world: 160
\$866.8 million (31 December 2011 est.)

Stock of broad money:
\$1.382 billion (31 December 2012 est.)
country comparison to the world: 159
\$1.92 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

Stock of domestic credit:
\$1.128 billion (31 December 2012 est.)
country comparison to the world: 155
\$2.042 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

Market value of publicly traded shares:
\$1.384 billion (31 December 2011)
country comparison to the world: 104
\$1.363 billion (31 December 2010)
\$1.383 billion (31 December 2009)

Current account balance:
-\$683.4 million (2012 est.)
country comparison to the world: 104
-\$758.5 million (2011 est.)

Exports:

\$1.193 billion (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 152

\$1.263 billion (2011 est.)

Exports - commodities:

tobacco 53%, tea, sugar, cotton, coffee, peanuts, wood products, apparel

Exports - partners:

Canada 9.8%, Zimbabwe 9.5%, Germany 6.7%, South Africa 6.3%, Russia 6%, US 5.7%, Egypt 5.3% (2012)

Imports:

\$1.901 billion (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 167

\$1.923 billion (2011 est.)

Imports - commodities:

food, petroleum products, semi-manufactures, consumer goods, transportation equipment

Imports - partners:

South Africa 26.5%, China 16.2%, Zambia 9.1%, India 8.5%, Tanzania 5.5%, US 4.1% (2012)

Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:

\$245.9 million (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 157

\$213.1 million (31 December 2011 est.)

Debt - external:

\$1.365 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 153

\$1.202 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

Stock of direct foreign investment - at home:

\$NA

Stock of direct foreign investment - abroad:

\$NA

Exchange rates:

Malawian kwachas (MWK) per US dollar -

249.11 (2012 est.)

156.93 (2011 est.)

150.49 (2010 est.)

141.14 (2009)

142.41 (2008)

Energy :: Malawi

Electricity - production:

1.736 billion kWh (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 136

Electricity - consumption:

1.614 billion kWh (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 143

Electricity - exports:

0 kWh (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 98

Electricity - imports:

0 kWh (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 210

Electricity - installed generating capacity:

299,500 kW (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 149

Electricity - from fossil fuels:

5.7% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 197

Electricity - from nuclear fuels:

0% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 134

Electricity - from hydroelectric plants:

94.3% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 9

Electricity - from other renewable sources:

0% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 155

Crude oil - production:

0 bbl/day (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 162

Crude oil - exports:

0 bbl/day (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 148

Crude oil - imports:

0 bbl/day (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 93

Crude oil - proved reserves:

0 bbl (1 January 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 161

Refined petroleum products - production:

0 bbl/day (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 203

Refined petroleum products - consumption:

12,060 bbl/day (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 150

Refined petroleum products - exports:

0 bbl/day (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 198

Refined petroleum products - imports:

7,209 bbl/day (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 139

Natural gas - production:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 162

Natural gas - consumption:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 169

Natural gas - exports:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 141

Natural gas - imports:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 94

Natural gas - proved reserves:

0 cu m (1 January 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 166

Carbon dioxide emissions from consumption of energy:

1.358 million Mt (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 158

Communications :: Malawi

Telephones - main lines in use:

173,500 (2011)

country comparison to the world: 129

Telephones - mobile cellular:

3.952 million (2011)

country comparison to the world: 116

Telephone system:

general assessment: rudimentary; privatization of Malawi Telecommunications (MTL), a necessary step in bringing improvement to telecommunications services, completed in 2006

domestic: limited fixed-line subscribership of about 1 per 100 persons; mobile-cellular services are expanding but network coverage is limited and is based around the main urban areas; mobile-cellular subscribership about 25 per 100 persons

international: country code - 265; satellite earth stations - 2 Intelsat (1 Indian Ocean, 1 Atlantic Ocean) (2010)

Broadcast media:

radio is the main broadcast medium; state-run radio has the widest geographic broadcasting reach, but about a dozen privately owned radio stations broadcast in major urban areas; the single TV network is government-owned; relays of multiple international broadcasters are available (2007)

Internet country code:

.mw

Internet hosts:

1,099 (2012)

country comparison to the world: 171

Internet users:

716,400 (2009)

country comparison to the world: 109

Transportation :: **Malawi**

Airports:

32 (2013)

country comparison to the world: 113

Airports - with paved runways:

total: 7

over 3,047 m: 1

1,524 to 2,437 m: 2

914 to 1,523 m: 4 (2013)

Airports - with unpaved runways:

total: 25

1,524 to 2,437 m: 1

914 to 1,523 m: 11

under 914 m:

13 (2013)

Railways:

total: 797 km

country comparison to the world: 99

narrow gauge: 797 km 1.067-m gauge (2008)

Roadways:

total: 15,451 km

country comparison to the world: 121

paved: 6,956 km

unpaved: 8,495 km (2003)

Waterways:

700 km (on Lake Nyasa [Lake Malawi] and Shire River) (2010)

country comparison to the world: 76

Ports and terminals:

Chipoka, Monkey Bay, Nkhata Bay, Nkhotakota, Chilumba

Military :: **Malawi**

Military branches:

Malawi Defense Forces (MDF): Army (includes Air Wing, Marine Unit) (2012)

Military service age and obligation:

18 years of age for voluntary military service; standard obligation is 2 years of active duty and 5 years reserve service (2012)

Manpower available for military service:

males age 16-49: 3,514,809 (2010 est.)

Manpower fit for military service:

males age 16-49: 2,132,909

females age 16-49: 2,043,925 (2010 est.)

Manpower reaching militarily significant age annually:

male: 183,683

female: 183,028 (2010 est.)

Military expenditures:

0.8% of GDP (2012)

country comparison to the world: 146

Transnational Issues :: **Malawi**

Disputes - international:

disputes with Tanzania over the boundary in Lake Nyasa (Lake Malawi) and the meandering Songwe River remain dormant