

OPENING REMARKS BY ODPP DIRECTOR MR BRIGHT S.M. MANGULAMA AT THE UNVEILING CEREMONY OF SOME PROJECTS AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

THURSDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2006

- The Deputy Chief Secretary, Mr Thouse Odala
- The UNDP Resident Representative, Mr Michael Keating
- Representatives from the Donor Community
- Senior Government Officials
- My Fellow ODPP Staff
- Members of the Press
- Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Office of the Director of Public Procurement, I wish to warmly welcome you all to this function this evening. This is a special day on the calendar of ODPP. As some of you may recall, ODPP started its operations just two years ago. In spite of its infancy, it has achieved a lot during these two years despite the human and financial constraints it is facing. Our assembling here this evening attests to this as we proudly look at what we have achieved this far.

Since the enactment of the Public Procurement Act in 2003 and the subsequent setting up of the Office, ODPP has enjoyed an enabling environment conducive for the roll out of its regulatory, oversight and monitoring functions. Such an environment has allowed the Office through its three core departments namely Regulatory, Advisory and Review; Professional Development; and Monitoring and Enforcement to carry out different activities within its mandate so that public procurement is done procedurally in accordance with the provisions of the Public Procurement Act, Procurement Regulations and Desk Instructions, among others.

Again, the existence of such an environment has been possible because of the prevailing political will that has enabled the Office to be autonomous as provided for in the Act and provided it with the necessary resources for its efficient and effective operation.

Our Guest of Honour, UNDP Resident Representative, ladies and gentlemen, through the prevailing environment, it has also been possible for ODPP to get the assistance from our co-operating partners like the UNDP, the World Bank, DFID, USAID, among others. Our gathering here this evening is a manifestation of UNDP's support.

It is pleasing, ladies and gentlemen, that in line with the global trend for Public Procurement institutions, ODPP is today computerised, and has gone online. As already demonstrated, all Procuring Entities and the public can electronically access a wide range of public procurement information, by logging in at www.odpp.gov.mw.

Besides being a source of public procurement information as we have seen, the website is further meant to compliment other communication channels Procuring Entities use to post their tenders and announce other procurement proceedings. It is our hope that all Procuring Entities will make good use of this facility to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness and professionalism of their procurement transactions.

This website, ladies and gentlemen, also provides an opportunity to the public to contact ODPP and report any form of malpractice they may come across regarding the conduct of public procurement. Reporting such issues would greatly help my Office to investigate and take the necessary measures provided for in the Public Procurement Act and properly link up with

other institutions like the Anti-Corruption Bureau. The importance of the role of Civil Society Organisations and members of the general public in reporting malpractices in public procurement that they come across cannot be overemphasized if we are to check and stop the malpractices.

The main purpose of such support from the UNDP, ladies and gentlemen, is to ensure that the Public Procurement Act and other related procurement documents are well understood by Procuring Entities and other stakeholders to ensure prudence in public procurement activities.

With UNDP's support it was realised that the understanding of the Act, systems and procedures of public procurement could be enhanced if sensitisation and awareness activities were given due attention right from the outset of the Office operations. To this end, UNDP has come in to support a wide range of activities including publications. Our stakeholders can attest to the vibrancy of ODPP through a wide range of publications some of which are available here and through a number of media outlets.

Again, I would like to inform you that, effective from this month, ODPP will have a quarterly publication in the name of *The Public Procurer* which will serve as a forum for constructive public procurement debate and a tool for sensitisation. This too has come about as a result of UNDP's financial and technical assistance which is greatly appreciated.

Such a pool of assistance, ladies and gentlemen, drove my Office to strategically reposition itself and envision its future. As we celebrate what UNDP is doing to ODPP, we felt it appropriate to launch our three- year Strategic Plan to run from 2006 to December 2008. To ensure that what we have strategized materialises, my Office is putting in place a Steering Committee to champion this visionary cause.

I am optimistic, ladies and gentlemen, that my Office will continue to enjoy the support of all our cooperating partners to ensure that our potential and energies are further explored and exploited for the betterment of public procurement activities in Malawi. We do not want to get contented with the two-year achievements because we know there is a lot expected from ODPP. This is why the Office has continued to get donor and Government support in its activities. There is more I could have said about the support we are receiving from the World Bank, USAID through the Millennium Challenge Threshold Programme as well as DFID. Their assistance is also greatly appreciated.

As an Office entrusted with oversight responsibility in public procurement, we pledge not to be a source of disappointment in as far as this role is concerned.

Our Guest of Honour, UNDP Resident Representative, ladies and gentlemen, with these few remarks, I thank you for your attention and may God bless you.