

The Malawi Environmental Observatory Network: its constitution, strategy and implementation plan

by

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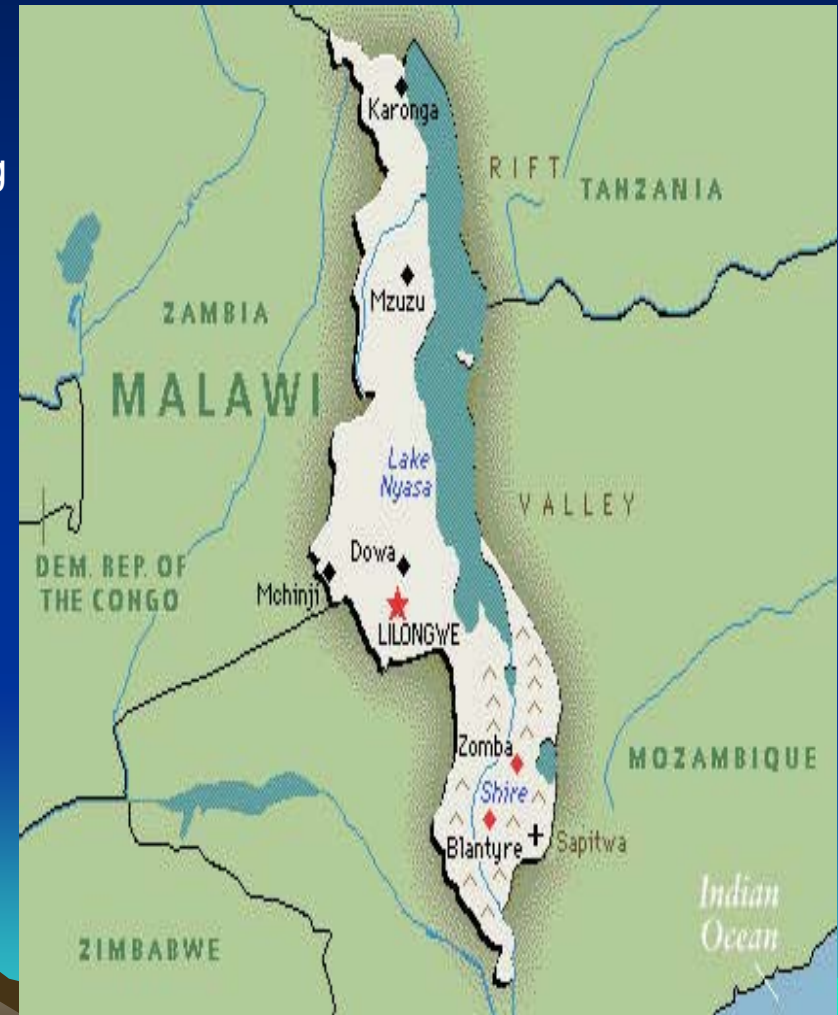
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CONTENT

- **Overview of environmental issues in Malawi**
 - Location within outhern Africa Region
 - Background
 - Pressure on natural resources
 - In adequate knowledge and skills for planning
 - Key environmental Issues
- **Constitution for MEON**
 - Objectives
 - Composition
 - Modus Operandum
 - Term of Office
- **Strategic Plan**
 - Strategic issues
 - Research themes and site
- **Implementation Plan**
 - MEON Secretariat
 - Baseline data studies
 - State Launching of MEON

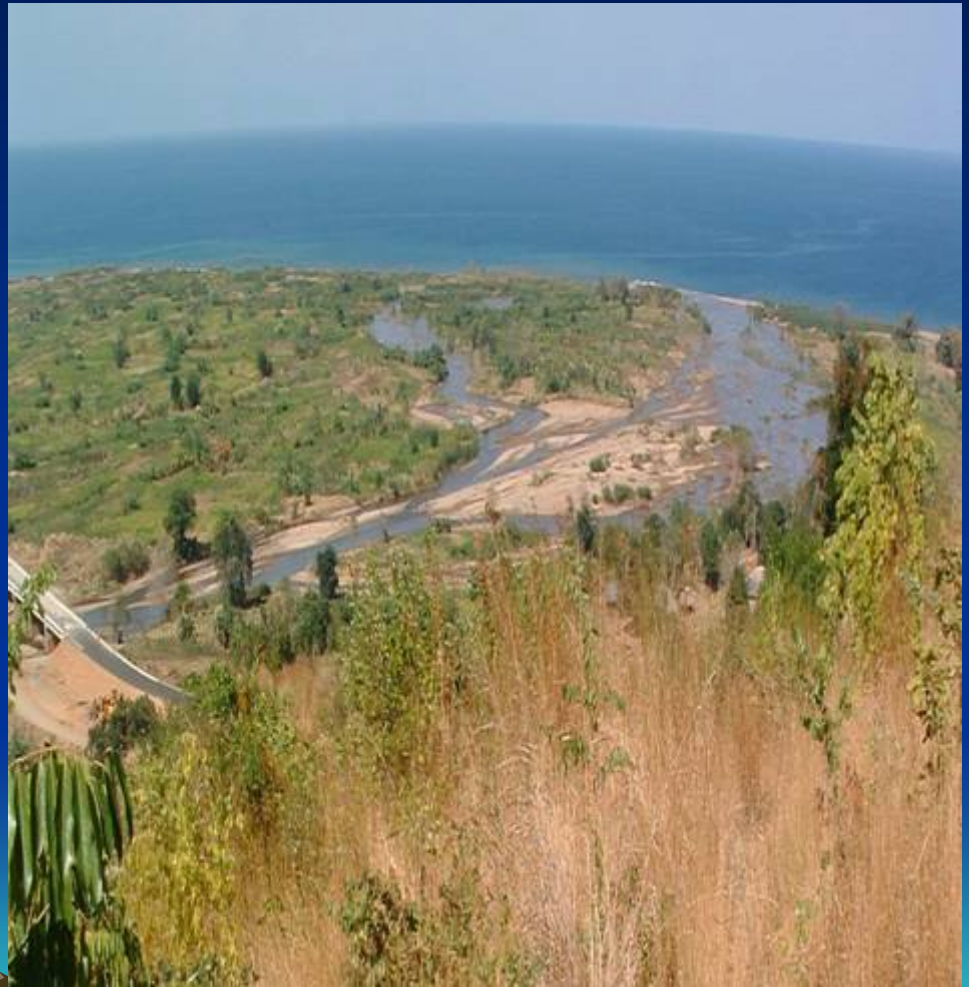


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Background

- Malawi is a land of farmers
- About 85% of the population depends on subsistence farming producing mostly maize and contributes about 90% of food production
- Agriculture also contributes about 90% of foreign earnings and accounts for about 40% of the GDP
- The Malawi industry is agro-based
- Agriculture accounts for about 80% of formal or wage employment



Pressure on Natural Resources

- Malawi has about the highest population density in the Southern African Region of between 100-550 persons per km²
- The population size is about 12 million the same as that of Zambia which has a land size of about five times that of Malawi
- The population growth rate is about 2.5% leading to a net loss of forest and agricultural land to settlements



Pressure on Natural Resources (Continued)

- The livelihoods depends on subsistence farming, small-scale fishery, forest resources, fuel-wood, charcoal and none woody products such as: mushrooms, millipedes, grasshoppers, white ants, honey and mice
- In 1987 Esnat Gwaza a 13yr old girl was killed by a car while trying to cross the road to capture green grasshoppers in the City of Blantyre
- Population exerts pressure on natural resources leading to their depletion and land degradation



In adequate knowledge and skills

- In adequate knowledge and skills has lead to lack of planning and incorporation of sustainable measures in utilization of natural resource base
- This inadequacy is at all level of society
- Inadequacy in water and soil conservation is leading to soil erosion and sedimentation
- At technician level there is ineffective extension of measures and messages
- At policy level: inappropriate or inadequate policies have been formulated and poor systemic integration is the order of the day



Key Environmental Issues in Malawi

- Soil erosion, land slides and sedimentation: affecting crop yield, hydropower production, fishery reproduction, transportation of good on lake Malawi
- Deforestation
- Water resources degradation
- Depletion of fish stocks
- Loss of biodiversity



WHY Malawi Environmental Observation Network (MEON)

- Environmental issues pose a threat and major challenges for sustainable development in Malawi and particularly:
 - Lack of systematic environmental observation, monitoring and research,
 - Lack of systemic integration in addressing such issues
- With Malawi Government support MEON is born



Objectives of MEON Constitution

- Main objective
 - to promote local, regional and international environmental research and monitoring of natural resources
- Specific objective
 - Secure long-term datasets on environment
 - Promote sharing and accessibility of data
 - Promote joint research between EONS
 - Enhance training and education on environment
 - Develop common methods and data management protocols



Composition

- Board of Trustees
 - MEOM shall have a board of trustees composed of representatives from:
 - The National Research Council of Malawi
 - Department of Environmental Affairs
 - Chairperson of the Executive Committee
 - Technical Expert
- Executive Committee
 - The Executive shall be composed of :
 - Chairperson,
 - Secretary,
 - Treasurer and
 - three committee members

Modus Operandum

MEON shall operate from an established secretariat office using:

- Board of Trustees
- The Executive Committee
- A Secretariat of paid up staff



Terms of Reference

- **The Board of Trustees:**
 - Policy formulation
 - Fiducially Responsibility
- **The Executive Committee**
 - Set-up a Secretariat of paid staff members
 - Set-up subcommittees as the needs arises
 - Supervise the implementation of policy
- **The Secretariat**
 - Responsible for running day-to-day affairs of MEON
 - Providing information to members
 - Production of material for publicity and marketing
 - Budgeting and financial management



Term of Office

- MEON has thirty registered members
- Only paid-up members will have voting rights
- The term of Office for executive members shall be three years
- Members will only be allowed for two terms after a popular vote



Strategic Issues

- MEON has identified five strategic issues:
 - Capacity building in environmental management
 - Promotion of networking amongst members
 - Facilitate knowledge generation on environment
 - Promotion of sharing and accessibility of information
 - Promotion of public participation and awareness of environmental issues



Main Research Themes

- MEON has identified seven research themes:
 - Land use and land cover change
 - Climate change and adaptation strategies
 - Water Resources Management
 - Public Health
 - Government Policy
 - Food security
 - Infrastructural development



Implementation Plan

- MEON has devised the following implementation plan
 - Establishment of the MEON Secretariat
 - Conduct country wide baseline studies to establish the status of the critical environmental parameters and the setting-up of monitoring frame
 - Analysis of existing data to establish trends and patterns
 - Establish monitoring and research for Poka Hills land slides
 - State launching of MEON to win political will and wholesome public awareness of the existence of MEON
 - Formed partnership with Environmental Forum for Communicators to be our mouth piece for awareness creation



Thank you

- For your attention

