

PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

SPEECH FOR THE CLOSING CEREMONY

By Rev Dr Felix Chingota, Chairperson of PAC

On 15th November 2019 at Linde Motel, Mponela, Malawi.

The Deputy Country Representative of UNICEF, Madam Margarita Tileva

The Chief for Publications in the Ministry of Information, Civicducation and Communication Technology, Madam Grace Kwalapu

Chief Gender and Development Officer, Mr Fred Simwaka

Fellow Religious Leaders

The Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen

On the onset, I would like to re-affirm the commitment of the Public Affairs Committee and of all other local religious organizations to a partnership relationship with UNICEF in the task of protecting and promoting the rights of the most vulnerable members of our society especially children. In fact all local religious organizations regard human rights as bestowed by God on all human beings, irrespective of age, colour or gender by virtue of their being created in the image of God. In light of this we do take every human being as possessing special human dignity. Therefore the task of promoting and the protecting the rights of children constitutes our obedience to God.

My fellow religious leaders, you will remember that at the opening of this workrock I did urge all of us that we should be agents of life rather than of death. I did challenge all of us that we should use our respective sacred scriptures in a proper manner. In this task, I would urge all of us to be humble knowing that God's mission (*missio Dei*) is not the property of the faith communities only; rather it also belongs organizations such as UNICEF. This morning, I am very grateful to God for I have heard testimonies from all of us

regarding the impact this workrock has made on us. The speech by Pastor Kaiya has summarised it all.

The partnership which has been established should help each one of us to implement the task as stated above. What is important is this partnership is that there should be a clear demarcation of areas of operation. The partnership has members and each member has to be conscious of its specific role to play. Let me take this opportunity to thank the organizers of this workrock for taking on board a suggestion which I made to Mrs Milca Chimbanga regarding the composition of participants. I did suggest that apart from inviting top religious leaders, it would help much include people responsible for day-to-day work about children and women in various faith communities. Therefore the demarcation of responsibilities does go down even with faith communities. For example, a bishop in a particular diocese can be invited to the meeting. However, such people have a lot in their trays. In most cases there is a person within the diocesan set-up who is responsible for children and women's ministry in the diocese.

In connection with this, I would like to commend participants to this workrock for coming up with a statement, which summaries the main outputs of the workrock. My plea is that document should be discussed in our various local faith communities so that specific activities which at implementing this statement are clearly spelt out.

Lastly, I would like to that God guiding this workrock. I would also like to thank th facilitators, Ministry of Information; UNICEF and all the participants. Let me also thank the media for your presence.

I would like to wish each one of us God's protection as we go back to our respective stations where God has us in order to serve Him alone.

Thank you and God bless.