

MALAWI-INDIA TRADE AND INVESTMENT FORUM BRIEF

MOUNT SOCHE HOTEL BLANTYRE, MALAWI, 18-20 FEBRUARY 2009

1.0 Introduction

The Malawi High Commission in India, in collaboration with the Ministry of Industry and Trade, and the Malawi Investment Promotion Agency (MIPA), will hold a Malawi-India Trade and Investment Forum in Malawi in 2009. Following the arrival of the High Commissioner in February 2008, this Forum could not have come at a better time. With its fully fledged trade and investment division, the High Commission wishes to strengthen the bilateral relationship that so happily exists between the two countries through trade and investment cooperation. India's fast growing economy provides a fertile ground for expansion of trade and investment for Malawi.

India has distinguished herself in many spheres including: Information and Communication Technology (ICT), High Quality Education, Pharmaceutical and Healthcare, Manufacturing, Textile and Garments, Tourism and Culture, Agriculture and Small and Medium Enterprise, among others.

Now that Malawi has identified her high growth sectors, namely: tourism, mining, manufacturing, an integrated cotton industry and agro-processing, time is ripe for the country to start focusing on value addition. In keeping with the new shared vision of the country, aimed at transforming the country from a predominantly importing and consuming country to a predominantly producing and exporting nation, all efforts are being geared towards increasing value addition. Keeping this objective in view, the forum has been organized to target investment in Agriculture and Irrigation, Agro-processing, Education, Hospitality industry, Mining, Hydropower Generation, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Infrastructure and Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Development.

2.0 Background

The relationship between Malawi and India dates back many years and the two countries share a lot in common, in addition to both being members of the commonwealth. The two countries enjoy a fairly substantial volume of trade between them. Although Malawi's exports to India have increased over the years, the trade balance is currently in favour of India. For example in 2006 Malawi exports to India were USD 3,354,846 against USD 50,000,000 imports from India. This means that there is a big scope to increase the volume of trade between the two countries.

Malawi is a peaceful country which has enjoyed tranquility since it attained independence from Britain in 1964. Malawi is an open liberalized economy which is characterized by a stable political environment, with friendly, well trained and hard working people. Companies in Malawi operate without government

hindrance or interference. Since 1992, Malawi has embraced democratic principles and today the footprint of democracy is visible as the country holds presidential and parliamentary elections every five years and the rule of law is upheld.

Malawi is endowed with vast natural resources including: beautiful fresh water lakes, rivers, mountains, fertile, arable land apart from minerals, which are yet to be exploited. Agriculture is the single most important sector of the economy as it employs about 80% of the work force and contributes 70% of foreign exchange earnings. The main agricultural products are: tobacco, sugar, tea and coffee. The country has taken steps to diversify the economy to achieve export led growth through promotion of non-traditional products. Some of the minerals found in Malawi are: Coal, Bauxite, Uranium, Phosphates, Semiprecious stones and Gemstones.

In 2007, the Government launched the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS). This medium-term development strategy is the main overarching strategy of the country and it recognizes the important role that Domestic as well as Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) plays in the economic growth and development of the country.

Besides, the Malawi Government has come up with deliberate policies aimed at creating a favourable macroeconomic environment. As a result, in the last four years, the country has witnessed low inflation, lower interest rates, stable and non volatile exchange rates and sustainable domestic debt. For example, Malawi's interest rates are down from around 35% in 2004 to about 15% now and that the inflation rate has dropped from 17.5% to 7.9% during the same period.

3.0 The Objective of the Forum

The objective of the Forum whose theme is “**Trade and Investment, a Gateway for Economic Development**” is aimed at providing an opportunity to Malawian and Indian businessmen to take advantage of the available trade and investment opportunities in the two countries with a view to promoting trade and investment.

4.0 Forum Format

In accordance with the proposed format of the forum, it will be held in plenary where stakeholders will be presented with Malawi's enabling environment and investment and trade opportunities. This will be followed by one on one or business to business meetings.

Ten great reasons for choosing Malawi as an investment destination:

Political stability;

Liberalized economy;
Strategic geographic location for access to markets;
Competitive labour costs, English speaking labour force;
Competitive incentives;
Good and constantly developing infrastructure;
Modern telecommunications;
Daily flight connections to regional and international markets;
Preferential access to regional and world markets including: Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), the EU Everything But Arms (EBA), US African Growth Opportunity Act (AGOA);

Rich natural resource base, unexploited mineral deposits; and interesting sites for tourism.

5.0 Conference participants

The conference has been primarily designed for businessmen from India to meet and interact with Malawian businessmen. They will come from both public and private sectors.

6.0 Sectors

The main sectors include: Agro-processing, Manufacturing, Cotton Farming and Ginning, Textiles and Garments, Mining, Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals, Mini Hydropower Generation, Agriculture and Fertiliser Manufacturing, Irrigation Imports and Exports, Infrastructure Development, Education, Hospitality and Culture

7.0 Venue and Date

The forum will be held at Sunbird Mount Soche Hotel in Blantyre from 18th to 20th February 2009.

8.0 Local hospitality and travel within Blantyre

The organisers have negotiated with the hoteliers, Sunbird Mount Soche Hotel, for a concessional rate of USD 180 per standard room per night. Local transport will also be provided from Chileka Airport to the venue of the meeting, Mount Soche Hotel in Blantyre.

9.0 Travel arrangements

Participants to the forum are expected to confirm to the organisers, the Malawi High Commission, so that the Mission can negotiate a rate with the airlines. However, participants are expected to meet the cost of air tickets to and from Blantyre, Malawi. As most airlines only fly to Lilongwe, participants are advised to make bookings up to Blantyre. Air Malawi has regular flights between Lilongwe and Blantyre everyday. Otherwise, there is a local bus that shuttles between Blantyre and Lilongwe.

10.0 Immigration and entry formalities

Participants of the conference should have a valid visa for entry into Malawi. Application forms are obtainable from the Malawi High Commission located at F-63, Poorvi Marg, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi. For more details regarding visas, log on the Malawi High Commission website: <http://www.malawi-india.org/consular.htm>

11.0 About Blantyre and Its Surroundings

Blantyre City, which was named after the home village of Dr. David Livingstone, the famous Scottish Doctor who 'discovered' lake Nyasa (Malawi), is the commercial hub of the country. Most of the traders in Blantyre are Indian who originated from Gujarat. The city is surrounded by beautiful mountains namely: Ndirande, Soche, Bangwe and Michiru. Places of interest in the city include: Henry Henderson Institute, which is the famous Scottish church built by the Scottish in 1890s, Mandala House which was one of the British companies in Malawi modelled along the British East Company established in India by the British. About 30 km to the south one is greeted by vast acres of green tea plantations and to the west of the city the Shire River which drains Africa's third largest Lake, Lake Malawi into the Zambezi River and the Indian Ocean. Lengwe Game Reserve is located some 90 km from Blantyre, close to the Shire River and provides habitat to some of Malawi's wildlife including: Hippos, Elephants, Lions, and many more.

Blantyre enjoys tropical climate throughout the year. From October to March the temperature averages around 28 degrees Celsius with hot wet weather. The month of February is a wet period for Blantyre.

12.0 Currency

Malawi currency is Malawi Kwacha (MK)

USD 1 (United States Dollar) \approx 140 MK (Malawi Kwacha)

13.0 People and Culture

Malawi is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious country. It is a land of equal opportunity with religious freedom and tolerance. The two main religions are Christianity and Islam.

14.0 Language

Malawi's official language is English while the main local dialect is Chichewa.

15.0 Other Useful Information

Malawi Standard Time is 2 hours ahead of GMT and 3.5 hours behind New Delhi.

The temperature during the month of February is likely to be around 15-30°C min/max.

The voltage is 240 volts / 50 Hz.

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A) PARTICIPANTS PARTICULARS:

Name of Company / Organization: _____
Name of Authorized Representative: _____
Designation: _____
Corporate Address: _____
City: _____ Pin Code: _____ Country: _____
Phone: _____
Mobile: _____ Fax: _____
E-mail: _____ Website: _____
Correspondence Address: _____
City: _____ Pin Code: _____ Country: _____
Phone: _____
Mobile: _____ Fax: _____
E-mail: _____
Contact Person: _____ Designation: _____

B) PRODUCT/ SERVICE DETAILS:

The Product or business details of the company:
1. _____ 4 _____
2. _____ 5 _____
3. _____ 6. _____

C) COMPANY/ ORGANIZATION PROFILE: (In 70 – 100 words)

This form should be completed by participants to the Malawi-India Trade and Investment Forum and to be forwarded to the above address (Malawi High Commission)