



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **EU and Malawi Government agree on New Rural Infrastructure Development Programme**

**The European Union (EU) and the Government of Malawi have signed today a programme to support rural infrastructure development. The new programme aims at contributing to rural poverty reduction by providing small scale rural infrastructures and preparing the ground for future infrastructure development in the irrigation sector. The Financing Agreement has a total value of EUR 32 million (approximately MWK 7.5 billion).**

The objective of the new Rural Infrastructure Development Programme (RIDP) is to improve the livelihood of rural population through infrastructure development.

"RIDP is an important corner stone in the European Union's support to the large majority of Malawians in rural areas. With the different programmes we are putting in place now, we hope that agricultural productions and income in rural areas can be further increased so that poverty can be reduced in a sustainable way" said EU's Ambassador to Malawi Alexander Baum.

RIDP focuses primarily on improving small scale rural infrastructure such as rural roads, bridges and small scale irrigation in order to promote productive activities and to enhance the socio-economic situation of the rural and peri-urban population of Malawi. It targets 15 districts. The programme builds on the achievements of the Income Generating Public Works Programme (IGPWP), which is soon coming to an end, and will also develop more synergies with another large EU funded programme, the Farm Income Diversification Programme (FIDP).

A specific component of the new programme will support capacity development for the irrigation sector. It will provide assistance in the preparation and implementation of policies and strategies to develop medium and large scale irrigation schemes throughout the country. At the centre of the component are 20 site specific feasibility studies for irrigation development to be conducted in view of future investment in the sector, which may include further EU support.

For more information, please contact:

Christophe Legrand, Press and Information Officer, EU Delegation to Malawi,  
[christophe.legrand@eeas.ec.europa.eu](mailto:christophe.legrand@eeas.ec.europa.eu)  
tel: 01 773 199