



On the Occasion of the Launch of Malawi's Women's Manifesto –

An Expression of Support from Scotland's Women for Independence to the Women of Malawi and Wolrec (Women's Legal Resources Centre)

On this very special day, we, a Scottish organisation called Women for Independence: Independence for Women, send our congratulations to all Malawian women on the launch of your Malawian Women's Manifesto. Let us say first who we are: Women for Independence: Independence for Women promotes the causes of Scottish independence and other constitutional changes likely to contribute to greater democracy and home-rule for Scotland, gender equality and social justice. We do this through a national organisation and a network of individuals and organised groups across Scotland, and by working to increase women's political engagement, nationally and in communities.

As women who campaign for the rights of women and girls in our own country of Scotland, we work in solidarity with you, our Malawian sisters. As women of Scotland, a country with centuries of joint history with Malawi, we feel a special bond with you, and we appreciate our common aims, which are those of women and girls throughout the world.

We applaud the content of your Women's Manifesto. As we read it, we cannot help but compare it to our own Womanifesto, which we shall launch in Scotland soon. Our process of developing our Womanifesto was very similar to your process, with meetings throughout our country, working groups on themes, and hard work by many individuals. So we know how much effort has gone into your Women's Manifesto, and we know its importance in your political environment, in particular your General Election this year. We appreciate the major achievement of Wolrec in particular, in coordinating your Women's Manifesto.

As we might expect, there are several points in common between our Womanifesto and your Women's Manifesto. We applaud your demands for economic decisions in Malawi to take account of women's lives, for a Women's Bank, for access to land, for access to funds for women to farm, for improved access to justice, for transparency in mining, for girls' safety and sanitation in schools, for an end to child rape and other child abuse, for the Malawian government to

increase awareness of women's rights and enforce its own laws against sexual harassment and sex discrimination, and for Malawian education to present positive masculinity and assertive femininity. Although the Malawian and Scottish contexts are different, your demands are similar to our demands in Scotland – as you will see when we launch our own Womanifesto.

You are ahead of us in time, and also in some of your demands. For example, we shall ask for a gender-competent Scottish National Investment Bank, while you ask for a Women's Bank. We have four themes, while you have more. So thank you for your leadership, your bravery in speaking out, and your efforts to represent such a variety of women in Malawi. We hope to do as well as you, and we hope that this is the beginning of our mutual support.

We wish you all the very best in achieving all your demands. We are far away, but we are with you in spirit!