

**REGIONAL CONSULTATION OF NGOs/CSOs WORKING IN
EDUCATION IN AFRICA
LILONGWE, MALAWI
HOTEL MERIDIEN CAPITAL**

30 September – 2 October 2002

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

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I. GETTING TO MALAWI

European Airlines flying to Malawi

British Airways and KLM (via Nairobi with Kenya Airways)

African Airlines flying to Malawi

Air Malawi, Air Zimbabwe, Air Tanzania, South African Airways, Kenya Airways, Ethiopian Airlines

Most international flights land at Lilongwe, Malawi's Capital, but several flights especially those from Johannesburg and Harare, land at the business centre of Blantyre in the south. The Consultation will take place in Lilongwe at Le Meriden Capital. Representatives should ensure that their final destination in their flight bookings is Lilongwe and NOT Blantyre.

All travelers pay an airport departure tax of US\$20 when flying out of the country. There is a charge for domestic departures of MK100.

II. ACCOMODATION, VISA AND TRANSPORT FROM THE AIRPORT

ACCOMMODATION

Le Meridien Capital, the venue of the meeting has offered a concessionary rate of US\$60 for bed and breakfast (English breakfast) excluding tax and service charge of 20%.

Kindly contact David Mulera, National Commission of Malawi for UNESCO to arrange your hotel booking.

VISAS

Representatives are advised to check with their travel agent if they require a visa – some nationals do and regulations change from time to time. All Commonwealth countries do not require visas. Passports should be valid for at least six months on arrival.

Representatives that need a visa are kindly requested to contact David Mulera, National Commission of Malawi for UNESCO, to arrange visa upon arrival. Please give your full name, nationality and passport number.

TRANSPORT FROM THE AIRPORT

Transportation from the Airport to the Hotel will be organized by the Consultation organizers.

Kindly contact David Mulera, National Commission of Malawi for UNESCO to communicate your travel details: time, dates and flight number for your arrival and departure.

III. WEATHER

September and October are generally dry warm months. Light clothing is recommended.

IV. MONEY

Malawi's unit of currency is the Kwacha, divided into 100 tambala. Foreign exchange can be converted at Commercial, National, Finance, Loita banks and there are several reputable *bureaux de change*. Credit cards are sometimes accepted in the cities and around the lake. However, the use of both foreign exchange and credit cards can be difficult outside major centres. Some hotels, including Le Meridien Capital also offer foreign exchange facilities.

BANKING HOURS

Mondays to Fridays 08:00 – 14:00 hrs

V. HEALTH

Check on immunization and anti-malaria medication. September and October do not have as many mosquitoes as compared to the rain season from November to April. However, insect repellent or long sleeved shirts and light trousers help to keep the mosquitoes at bay in the evenings especially when visiting the lakeshores.

VI. LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

The official language in Malawi is English. The commonly spoken local language is *Chichewa*. Other languages spoken in Malawi include *Chiyawo*, *Chilomwe*, *Chitumbuka*, *Chitonga* and *Chisena*.

Malawian music, dance and literature (particularly in the oral tradition) are alive and well.

VII. GEOGRAPHY AND ECONOMY

Malawi is a republic in South-Eastern Africa. It was formerly the British Protectorate of Nyasaland. The country is bounded on the North by Tanzania on the east by lake Malawi, on the Southeast and South by Mozambique and on the West by Zambia.

Malawi is about 118000 Km², nearly one-fourth of which is water surface (Lake Malawi and small lakes). The population of Malawi is about 9.8 million (1998 Population and Housing census).

Malawi is a land of contrasts with its mountains and high plateaus, forests, bush lands and low-lying Shire Valley which is part of the Great Rift Valley. The Great Rift Valley runs across eastern Africa like an ancient scar, from the Red Sea in the North to the Zambezi valley in the south. Malawi has two Rift Valley Lakes – Lake Malawi and Lake Malombe.

As one of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) Malawi's economy is largely based on agriculture and most of the people either are involved in farming projects or are subsistence farmers. Tobacco, sugar and tea are the main exports and coffee is also grown. The main staple food crop is maize.