



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

MALAWI

GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

SEPTEMBER 2003



USAID's support for natural resources management in Malawi has proved to be indispensable in not only preserving vital carbon sinks but also in stimulating economic development. Through improved management practices, training, and technical assistance, the people of Malawi have learned the importance of undertaking income-creating sustainable development measures.

Background. The southern African country of Malawi faces environmental challenges such as deforestation, land degradation, water pollution from agricultural run-off, and siltation of spawning grounds that endangers fish populations. Coupled with a low capacity to confront these challenges and ongoing political transformation, Malawi is in need of international assistance. In response, USAID began its program of assistance to Malawi in the early 1960s, and is working to help the country achieve sustainable economic growth. This is being accomplished in part by increasing agricultural incomes and enhancing the management and conservation of natural resources. Natural resources such as forests, for example, are beneficial to the climate because they remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store carbon both above ground in their biomass and in the soils below. USAID helps protect Malawi's resources against further environmental degradation by building local capacity to manage forest and agricultural resources in a more sustainable manner. USAID works with many sectors of society to achieve these goals.

Sector-Specific Climate Change Activities. To increase community and private sector involvement in natural resources management, USAID has worked with the government of Malawi to strengthen the institutional framework within which community-based natural resources management programs are designed, implemented, and monitored. Training and technical assistance have been provided in enterprise development, sustainable agricultural practices, forest management, wildlife conservation, soil erosion control, water conservation, fisheries, and geographic information systems (GIS). As a result, through support for Community Partnerships for Sustainable Resource Management (COMPASS), land use and forest management activities have succeeded in protecting wildlife reserves and natural ecosystems from illegal harvesting while providing income-earning opportunities to rural communities. For example, to decrease the rate of deforestation, COMPASS has promoted the manufacture and use of more fuel-efficient wood stoves. As a result, more than 31,000 fuel-saving stoves are in use throughout households in Malawi, saving approximately 20% in wood-fuel consumption.

USAID has also supported the government in implementing a comprehensive policy and legislative reform program. These policies have shifted the rights and responsibilities of managing the country's natural resources from the government to the local communities and end-users. To increase forest resources and improve soil fertility, USAID initiated activities at over 300 sites that have resulted in 10 million new tree seedlings being

USAID's partners in climate change activities in Malawi include*:

- Community Partnerships for Sustainable Resource Management (COMPASS)
- Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA)
- Department of National Parks and Wildlife
- Malawi Agro-Forestry Extension project (MAFE)

* Because partners change as new activities arise, this list of partners is not comprehensive.

planted. As these trees grow, they will act as a “sink” by sequestering carbon from the atmosphere, thereby slowing the build-up of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. The root systems of the trees will help retain organic matter (carbon) in the soil, which also helps reduce emissions to the atmosphere from soil erosion.

For more information on Malawi, visit USAID/Malawi's Mission Web site at:

- <http://www.usaid.gov/mw/>