

ECAMA NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2021 ISSUE

The official monthly newsletter of the Economics Association of Malawi

MESSAGE FROM ECAMA PRESIDENT



Esteemed Members

I am delighted to bring you this inaugural monthly ECAMA newsletter. I am encouraged by the continued feedback received from members through various fora and media.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, our physical interactions have been very minimal but there is very strong evidence that ECAMA continues to be a key player in the economy. In order to improve our communication with members, it has

become necessary to start producing the newsletter monthly rather than quarterly.

ECAMA will continue to play a pivotal role in this country's development agenda as we commence implementation of the MW2063.

As evidenced by the updates given in this newsletter, there is an increased collaboration between ECAMA and other stakeholders. With the increased number of staff at the Secretariat, ECAMA is now able to undertake more activities. Let me take this opportunity to appreciate and thank all members, government and development partners for the continued financial and technical support provided to the association.

This edition offers an update on activities and news on the work being done by the Secretariat and the Executive Committee, a cause that will continue to be championed by subsequent bulletins. I am looking forward to expanding the scope of the ECAMA Newsletter to include partnerships, advertisements and conference announcements.

LAURYN NYASULU

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S NOTE



It has been 4 months since I joined ECAMA Secretariat as Executive Director. I am delighted to write to you, through this inaugural ECAMA monthly newsletter.

This Newsletter is a product of contributions by members of the Secretariat covering various activities that the Secretariat implemented over the month of

August 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic derailed Secretariat work plan as a number of planned activities that involved physical meetings had to be postponed. Nevertheless, the Secretariat was able to actively participate in some activities virtually and physically under strict COVID-19 preventive measures. The Secretariat continues to be an active partner in championing the MW2063.

I would like to convey my profound gratitude to the Executive Committee for the overall leadership, support and motivation throughout the envisioning process of this monthly newsletter.

I also would like to extend my sincere appreciation to my colleagues at the Secretariat for working tirelessly to ensure that we play our role in the country's policy arena.

FRANK CHIKUTA

HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE MONTH

1 STRENGTHENING THE SECRETARIAT

Mr Emmanuel Banda joined ECAMA as Senior Economist. In addition, the Secretariat is currently hosting both undergraduate and graduate Economics interns.



Part of the current ECAMA Secretariat staff

During the course of the month, the undergraduate intern, Zaine Mpitampita who is a final year student at the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), also completed his two months internship at the ECAMA Secretariat.

2 2021 UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' DEBATES

ECAMA in collaboration with Oxfam in Malawi and LUANAR is organizing University Students' Debates on Public Finance Management (PFM). The debates are part of the activities under the **"Enhanced evidence-based research to inform policy decision making in PFM"** project being implemented by the consortium with support

from the European Union.

The aim of these debates is to create a platform for young people to share knowledge and understanding of the public financial management and accountability system including its strengths and weaknesses as perceived and policy direction for improving the systems. Participating universities will compete regionally and at national level.



Debaters poses with Judges after the debate

The inaugural debate of this year's competition took place on 20th August, 2021 between University of Malawi (UNIMA) and the Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences (MUBAS).

3 DIVERSIFY WITH TOBACCO - ECAMA ATTENDS FUTURE OF TOBACCO SENSITIZATION WORKSHOP

The Tobacco Commission (TC) says Malawi remains one of Africa's largest exporters of tobacco and it is among the top ten producers of tobacco leaf in the world.

However, the country faces a constant debate on the future of tobacco as the main foreign exchange earner and contributor to the economy. This notwithstanding, the demand for Malawi's tobacco leaf especially burley, remains high as the leaf has a good reputation as a flavourless and clean filler.

This was said at the one-day discussion forum organized by TC to discuss the future of tobacco in Malawi. It is hoped that through such discussions, Malawi can reposition itself in relation to tobacco production in its quest to diversify its export base.

TC further argues that globally, the tobacco industry is projected to grow by 1.9% by the year 2028. Malawi therefore, needs to embrace modern methods of production while adhering to environmental, social and governance requirements.

ECAMA urged the TC to critically look at ways of dealing with the existing bottlenecks that hamper competition in the sector as the industry is currently awash with anti-competitive tendencies that disadvantage the farmer and the economy at large.



Picture credit: Tobacco Commission

4 ECAMA AT NATIONAL GREEN CLIMATE CONFERENCE

Climate change presents one of the biggest threats to sustainable development in Malawi and beyond. Its widespread and unprecedented impacts disproportionately burden the poorest and most vulnerable. Realizing that effective climate action needs a multi-stakeholder approach, ECAMA took part in the two-day conference. Environmental sustainability is one of the

key enablers in the MW2063 because Malawi needs to ensure that all current development efforts are not harming the environment and jeopardizing the livelihoods of future generations, National Planning Commission Director General (NPC DG), Dr. Thomas Munthali, told the conference in his key note address. The NPC DG stressed that if climate change management is not carefully coordinated, Malawi is unlikely to achieve its development aspirations of graduating into a middle-income economy and accelerating achievement of most of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The socio-economic costs of Climate change as revealed by the effects of the 2015 floods are reduced export earnings and food production, and loss of human capital. Pursuing climate action and sustainable development in an integrated and coherent way offers the strongest approach to enable Malawi to minimize the socio-economic costs of climate change and to achieve its national and international development goals.

5 IS NATIONAL DEBT GOOD?

The Secretariat hosted Mr. Frank Ngalande who made an introductory presentation on national debt titled "IS NATIONAL DEBT GOOD?" Mr. Ngalande is a graduate student and his presentation was made towards his study of Master of Management in Development and Economics at University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa.

His presentation mainly hinged on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 which mainly focuses promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. He tackled the question "HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH DEBT BEFORE IT DISTRESSES THE ECONOMY?" comparing Malawi's economy to other nations'

economies.

The Executive Director, Mr. Frank Chikuta, expressed his gratitude to Mr. Ngalande for his very insightful and educative presentation on national debt.

Mr. Ngalande plans to hold a public lecture on public finance in October 2021. The aim of the lecture, is to raise public awareness on Public Finance Management and also provide an independent insight to government as they manage current and prepare future national budgets.

6 ECAMA MEETS IFPRI

The ECAMA Secretariat held a meeting with the International Food and Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) on data sourcing. In this meeting, ECAMA outlined its plans for the association to set up a data portal which would be a source of economic data for its members. Following this, IFPRI agreed to make data more easily accessible to ECAMA as it does with its other stakeholders and to collaborate with the Association on any other upcoming activities.

REMINDER

2021 MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION

ECAMA would like to encourage its esteemed members to renew their membership and pay subscription fees for 2021.

The corporate membership categories and their annual fees are as follows:

Platinum Members	K3,000,000
Gold Members	K1,500,000
Silver Members	K500,000

Individual membership annual fees are at K50,000 per member and K5,000 each for students.

The membership form can be downloaded from the following link:
<http://www.ecamamw.com/about-us/membership>

UPCOMING EVENTS

Date	Activity	Venue
10/09/2021	Official launch of the 2021 University Students' Debates: CUNIMA vs. BIU	Blantyre
16/09/2021	Students' Debates (3): MAGU vs. PLU	Lilongwe
22/09/2021	Students' Debates (4): LUANAR vs. MIM	Lilongwe
24/09/2021	Students' Debates (5): MZUNI vs. UNILIA	Mzuzu
21/10/2021	Public Finance Management Research Symposium	Lilongwe
11/11/2021	2021 ECAMA Annual Economic Conference	Mangochi

OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Any update on activities being undertaken by the Secretariat in collaboration with the Executive Committee is officially communicated through the following:



www.ecamamw.com



facebook.com/ECAMA4



twitter.com/ECAMA_official



linkedin.com/in/ecama2019/

FEEDBACK

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