

**SPEECH MADE BY THE
CHAIRMAN OF
AHL COMMODITIES EXCHANGE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

DR EVANS MATABWA

**AT THE EXECUTIVE BUSINESS LAUNCH
OF
AHL COMMODITIES EXCHANGE
ON
THURSDAY, 18TH JULY 2013,
CROSSROADS HOTEL**

- The Guest of Honour, the Chinese Ambassador to Malawi, His Excellency Mr Pan Hejun and Mrs Hejun.
- Board of Directors of AHL Commodities Exchange
- Distinguished Excellencies, Ambassadors and High Commissioners.
- The Governor of Reserve Bank of Malawi or His Representative
- Chief Executives and Managing Directors of Various Institutions.
- Our International Guests from different parts of the Globe.
- Members of the Press.
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

This day, the 18th of July 2013, is a historic day to the Agriculture sector in Malawi.

Tonight, we have come to set the terms of trade for our Agricultural Commodities, terms that will translate to an economic revolution for the country.

We are coming from a background where our agricultural produce disappeared out of Malawi much without an appropriate identity, and with very little to account for as revenue for the country.

Global players in commodities did not know where to start from to access the wider base of Agricultural produce from Malawi.

Guest of Honor, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, we come from a background where farmers hardly knew the real value of their commodities. They grew the crops, disposed them off through a quick road-side sale and returned home waiting for the same story, just in a different year.

As a country, we are emerging from a pattern where traders spent a lot of time and huge amounts of financial resources scouting for, and mobilizing commodities from every corner of this country.

We are coming from a background where financial institutions did not have hope for collateral in sponsoring trade in Agricultural Commodities.

Today, as AHL Commodities Exchange, we are pleased to be the ultimate solution to the many challenges that our country has faced for a long time.

We are proud to present to the world, a Commodity Shopping Infrastructure which gives them unlimited success to Malawi's best when it comes to Agricultural produce.

You now have all the guarantees on both the quality and the quantities, from Malawi.

We have today fulfilled our obligation to create a vehicle that seeks to empower the farmers and sellers to remain informed about prices for their crops, even beyond the borders.

This is our gift to Malawians because we want to reduce transactional costs associated with the trading of commodities. We believe, this will further prompt value addition and hence maximize returns throughout the value chain.

With AHCX, we have unveiled an opportunity for producers, sellers and buyers to access easy financing which will stimulate growth in the economy. The confidence in our exchange infrastructure will enable stakeholders to take commodities in our warehouses as a high value instrument for purposes of

loan security. Indeed, why should farmers remain poor when they can grow crops with such a value?

Guest of Honour, Ladies and Gentlemen, we have every reason to celebrate the birth of AHL Commodities Exchange. Malawi's agricultural capabilities will now be visible.

This, therefore is an opportunity to increase the country's export base. Let us seize the moment. Let us do away with poverty.

As Mahatma Gandhi once said: "*Poverty is the worst form of violence*". As a country, we need to deal with this kind of violence. We must and we will.

We must take ownership of our destiny as a country. On this point, I would like to thank our donors in a special way for assisting the country to boost Agricultural production through provision of inputs and other forms of production related technical assistance.

As a country, we should make progress from that point. We should not expect the same donors to establish and run a commodity market for us.

It would be asking for too much to expect the very Donors to find buyers for our commodities as a country.

Let us therefore have the spirit, the courage and the will to believe in ourselves.

To my fellow Chief Executives and Captains in private sector institutions, I have one reminder to share.

We have these jobs today because someone, or a group of people made a decision to establish these businesses. They never looked back.

Let us take it as an obligation to create something that will help the future generations. We must do that now, as we enjoy the fruits of those that came before us.

I would like to share a quote from Woodrow Wilson, the 28th President of USA. The quote reads:

“You are not here merely to make a living. You are here in order to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, with a finer spirit of hope and achievement. You are here

to enrich the world, and you impoverish yourself if you forget that errand."

To Management and Staff of AHL Group and the Exchange, I would like to say that the journey begins now. We have opened the door to the world. There is no turning back. Let us keep up the hard work.

Our Guest of Honour, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to pay tribute to the Leadership of this country, and the entire government machinery for the support that they have rendered to the Exchange during the entire process of project implementation.

Special thanks to Your Excellency Ambassador Pan Hejun, for accepting to Grace this occasion.

Our heartfelt appreciation to the International guests, local stakeholders and all invited guests for demonstrating that you are ready to walk with us.

A big thank you to the organizing team for this event for a job very well done.

I would like to close with a quote from one of the Chinese greatest, Lao Tzu. The quote reads *“The rise and fall of a nation rests with everyone of its citizens.*

Guest of Honour, Ladies and Gentleman, I thank you.