MALAWI UNIVERSITY OF
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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MUST, Rephaiah sign MoU
for establishment of a pharmaceutical plant.

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EDITORIAL TEAM

TECHNICAL ADVISOR
Alfred Chinombo
University Registrar

CHIEF EDITOR
James Mphande
Communications & Marketing Manager

EDITOR/ WRITER
Eddie Kamcholoti
Communications Assistant

EDITOR/ WRITER
Mary Mwambongo
Communications Assistant

LAYOUT DESIGNER
Justice Ndau
Communications Assistant

OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

- Gerald Kanono
- Jessie Fundudwa
- Jacqueline Makhenjera
- Fanuel Msiska

PUBLISHER

MUST Communications Office
communication@must.ac.mw
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EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Readers

There is something powerful about seeing ideas move beyond lecture rooms and laboratories into the real world, where they solve problems, create opportunities, and improve lives. In this edition of our newsletter, that journey comes alive through the stories we share.

At the heart of many of these stories is a growing spirit of collaboration between the university and industry, in this case as exemplified by the collaboration between MUST and Rephaiah to establish a pharmaceutical plant. Beyond this, more than ever, we are seeing partnerships that are not just symbolic, but practical and results-driven. Researchers are working side by side with industry players, students are gaining hands-on exposure, and together, they are shaping solutions that matter. It is encouraging to see how these connections are making our work more relevant and impactful.

You will also read about exciting innovations and technologies emerging from our university community. These are not just projects, they are ideas driven by curiosity, resilience, and a desire to make a difference. From tackling challenges in agriculture and health to exploring new digital possibilities, our students and staff continue to show that innovation thrives where there is support, creativity, and purpose.

Beyond research and innovation, this issue captures the everyday life of the university, the events, milestones, and achievements that bring our community together. These moments, big and small, remind us that a university is not only defined by its outputs, but by its people. It is in these shared experiences that a sense of belonging and pride is built.

We also highlight the importance of partnerships, both within and beyond our borders. By working with others, locally, regionally, and globally, we are learning more, doing more, and reaching further. These collaborations are helping us grow in ways we could not achieve alone, and they continue to shape the future of our institution.

As you go through this edition, we hope you find stories that resonate with you, that spark new ideas, or simply remind you of the important work being done across the university. Each feature is part of a bigger picture, one of progress, connection, and possibility.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us.
Enjoy the read.

James Mphande
Chief Editor

MUST, REPHAIAH SIGN MoU FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF PHARMACEUTICAL PLANT

By Jessie Fundudwa

Malawi has taken a bold step toward strengthening its health security and economic resilience following a landmark partnership between MUST and Rephaiah, an Icelandic pharmaceutical firm, to establish a local drug manufacturing plant at the university's industrial park.

The collaboration marks a transformative moment for the nation, positioning Malawi to reduce reliance on imported medicines while building a sustainable, innovation-driven pharmaceutical sector.

At the signing ceremony, MUST Council Vice Chairperson, Ms Thokozile Kuwali, described the initiative as a strategic national project with far-reaching benefits.

She emphasized that local production of medicines will help the country save scarce foreign exchange, strengthen industrial capacity, and create opportunities for exports in the regional market.

According to Kuwali, the partnership reflects the university's commitment to translating research into tangible solutions that directly improve livelihoods and accelerate national development.

Rephaiah Chairperson Professor Sveinbjorn Gizurarson highlighted the significance of the collaboration in raising pharmaceutical standards in the country.

He noted that the project will not only deliver high-quality medicines but also facilitate technology transfer, strengthen quality assurance systems, and enhance drug security.

By working closely with local scientists, Gizurarson said, the initiative will nurture skills development and foster a new generation of pharmaceutical innovators in Malawi.

The Government of Iceland, through Ambassador David Bjarnason, reaffirmed its support for the partnership, underscoring the importance of global cooperation in advancing health systems.

Ambassador Bjarnason said the collaboration will deepen ties

between academia and industry, ensuring that research breakthroughs translate into scalable manufacturing solutions that benefit both Malawi and the wider region.

On behalf of the government, Principal Secretary for Industrialisation in the Ministry of Industrialisation, Business, Trade and Tourism, Dr Bright Molande, commended MUST for demonstrating its growing role as a hub of production, innovation, and job creation.

He said government looks forward to a day when public universities will be paying dividends instead of asking for funds due to their involvement in industrialisation and entrepreneurship.

He noted that the project aligns with Malawi's broader industrialization agenda and will contribute to building a competitive knowledge-based economy.

Beyond its economic impact, the partnership symbolizes a powerful shift toward self-reliance in healthcare.

By producing essential medicines locally, Malawi will improve access, stabilize supply chains, and strengthen its preparedness for future health challenges.

The initiative also reinforces MUST's reputation as a university that not only educates but actively drives solutions to national priorities.

The ceremony began with a site visit to MUST's industrial park, where the pharmaceutical manufacturing facility will be constructed.

As construction and operational planning move forward, the collaboration is expected to inspire confidence among investors, researchers, and students alike.

It stands as a testament to what can be achieved when academia, government, and international partners unite around a shared vision a healthier, more prosperous Malawi powered by home-grown innovation.

STAKEHOLDERS MEET ON BIODIVERSITY DATA GOVERNANCE

By James Mphande

MUST, Environment Affairs Department (EAD), CIFOR-ICRAF (Centre for Forestry Research and World Agroforestry Centre) and other local stakeholders under the umbrella of Regional Centre of Excellence for Biodiversity, Forests and Seascapes for Eastern and Southern Africa (RCoE-ESA), held a meeting in Salima from March

23, 2026 for a data governance workshop aimed at supporting Convention on Biodiversity Diversity (CBD) implementation and National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) operationalization.

Malawi, as a party to the CBD, is required to strengthen biodiversity monitoring, reporting, and data governance systems to effectively implement and report on its NBSAP and the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

On the first day, EAD, under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Climate Change and MUST presented the revised ecosystem types map, revised ecological condition map, revised protection level map and revised ecosystem threat status map.

These maps were products of the Spatial Biodiversity Assessments, Prioritization and Planning (SBAPP), a regional project covering Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa and Namibia, that MUST and EAD are implementing.

On the second day, the meeting, with guidance from CIFOR-ICRAF, learned from Kenya on how data management and governance is done to explore ways of implementing some best practices for adoption in Malawi.

According to biodiversity stakeholders in Malawi, data management and governance has been a huge setback, leading to challenges in proper assessments, planning and management of biodiversity.

Apparently, most data is in silos, and stakeholders struggle to access data from custodians and the aim is to change this by making sure such data is easily accessible.

Meanwhile, the local team outlined critical datasets, their custodians and databases available, validation, contact persons, challenges and recommendations etc for easy access going forward.

Speaking on the opening day, Dr Tiwonge Gawa from MUST said the "Building biodiversity knowledge for action in Southern Africa: Spatial Biodiversity Assessment, Prioritisation and Planning (SBAPP)" project developed spatial products that will assist with National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) reporting, especially on targets 1, 2 and 3.

"Effective implementation of the NBSAP and reporting under Article 26 of the CBD requires coordinated biodiversity data systems, functional data-sharing mechanisms, and alignment between national indicators and global reporting frameworks," she said.

She also said previous partner engagements by CIFOR-ICRAF in Malawi identified governance, coordination, and data-sharing gaps that limit the efficiency and effectiveness of biodiversity reporting and implementation.

"This workshop brought together members of the National Technical Committee (NTC) of the SBAPP project and also members of the Biodiversity Information Management Forum established in 2017 to validate the 2025 national spatial products of the SBAPP project with the aim of moving from identifying challenges to operationalising a structured and coordinated biodiversity data governance approach," added Dr Gawa.

Among others, the workshop sought to validate national spatial products for use in the NBSAP reporting and collate key data needed in improving future versions of the mapping products; draw lessons in spatial and forestry data-sharing framework existing in the region to be considered for Malawi; strengthen alignment between Malawi's biodiversity data systems and CBD/GBF reporting requirements; map biodiversity data flows, institutional roles, reporting responsibilities and identify governance, technical, and policy gaps affecting NBSAP implementation, and agreeing on a roadmap toward formalised biodiversity data governance and data sharing protocols.

On the third day, the meeting mapped the way forward towards data sharing protocols.

Representing CIFOR-ICRAF, Dr Isaac Nyoka from the ICRAF Malawi office, emphasized the need to look at biodiversity in a broader way so that stakeholders do not have a narrow understanding and therefore limited scope for planning and management.

Among stakeholders in attendance were officials from Forestry, Fisheries, Water Resources, Physical Planning Land Resources, National Parks and Wildlife, Museums, Agriculture Research Services, Environmental Affairs, and Lands departments, Mzuzu University (Mzuni), Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (Luanar), University of Malawi (Unima), Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy (CEPA), Malawi Environmental Protection Authority (MEPA), RCoE-ESA, CIFOR-ICRAF, Forestry Research Institute of Malawi (FRIM), and Wildlife Society of Malawi (WESM).

HOW MALAWI'S MINERAL WEALTH CAN BUILD BETTER FUTURE

By Fanuel Msiska

A lecturer from MUST say Malawi has a strong opportunity to turn its mineral resources into real national development.

In his recent commentary titled 'From "Mineral Criticality" to Economic Opportunity', Emmanuel Chinkaka, a lecturer in Applied Earth Sciences from the Ndata School of Climate and Earth Sciences at MUST, explained that critical minerals are defined by their importance to modern technologies and the risks in their supply.

"Critical minerals are essential for technologies like renewable energy and electric vehicles," he said, adding that global demand has created intense competition among countries.

Chinkaka pointed out that Malawi is increasingly attracting global attention due to its mineral resources.

He cited major projects such as Songwe Hill in Phalombe, Kangankunde in Ntcheu, Kasiya project in Lilongwe, and Kayelekera uranium mine in Karonga as signs of this growing interest.

"These projects show that Malawi is becoming an important player in the global mineral economy," he said.

However, Chinkaka stressed that the real benefit will depend on how well the country manages its resources.

"The real question is whether Malawi can convert this opportunity into long-term development," he said.

He emphasized the need for strong governance, transparency, and investment in skills and infrastructure.

"Mining should not only be about extraction, it should create jobs and support the economy," he added.

Chinkaka believes that with the right approach, Malawi can turn its mineral wealth into a foundation for inclusive and sustainable development.

HOW A DAY AT MUST TURNED DREAMS INTO DETERMINATION

By Gerald Kanono

What seemed like a simple school visit became a life-changing experience for students from Khama Langa Private Secondary School in Ntcheu when they stepped onto MUST's Thyolo campus on March 20, 2026.

From the moment they arrived at the campus, it was clear that this was more than just a tour. Through interactions with the university authorities, the students were introduced to what it truly takes to succeed at university: hard work, focus, and determination.

They learned about academic life and the journey required to earn a place at MUST.

Speaking on behalf of the school's headteacher, Ms Oliannah Nyirongo, said the experience would have a lasting impact on the learners.

"The experience that students had will motivate them, and they really benefitted from the visit," she said.

For the students, the visit turned ideas into reality. Walking through laboratories, the library, the cafeteria, and other key facilities, they began to see themselves as future university students.

Form Four student Mickson Mwadzelanji said the visit changed how they think about their future.

"The visit inspired us to work hard in our MSCE examinations so that we can achieve good grades and fulfill our dream of studying at MUST," he said.

The trip showed that visiting MUST is not just about seeing buildings, it is about awakening ambition, shaping goals, and building the determination to achieve them.

For these students, the experience was a reminder that their dreams are possible, and that their journey starts now.

A YOUNG MIND INSPIRED TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

By Mary Mwambongo

At just 16 years old, Mike Bwanali has already experienced the harsh reality of climate change in a way many only hear about.

A Form One student at Liwonde Community Day Secondary School in Chibwana Village, under Traditional Authority Sitolo in Machinga District, Mike remembers one night when strong winds tore through his family's home.

The iron sheets that once sheltered them were ripped off and blown away, leaving the house exposed and the family vulnerable.

"Life was not the same," he recalls.

With their home damaged, Mike and his family had no choice but to seek refuge with relatives. Privacy was lost. Comfort became a luxury.

Like many families affected by extreme weather, they had to start again with very little.

But while that storm happened some time ago, the effects of climate change are still part of his daily life.

Recently, after heavy rains, the roads in his area became muddy and nearly impassable, making his journey to school a struggle. What used to be a simple walk turned into a difficult and exhausting experience not just for Mike, but for many students.

"Sometimes it is difficult to even reach school," he says. "The roads are muddy and hard to pass."

For Mike, climate change is not something he reads about in books. It is something he continues to live through.

Yet, in the middle of these challenges, a new opportunity has given him hope.

This week, the African Drone and Data Academy (ADDA), a UNICEF-funded initiative based at MUST, conducted orientation sessions in schools across Chiradzulu, Mwanza, Balaka, and Machinga districts.

During the orientation, students were introduced to Climate STEM Clubs and encouraged to take part in them. Instead of immediate enrolment, students were guided on what the clubs are about and were given application forms to apply and become members.

For Mike, that moment was a turning point.

"It has opened my eyes," he explains. "Now I know I can take part in fighting the effects of climate change."

Inspired by what he learned, Mike has already made a decision, he will apply to join the club.

Through these Climate STEM Clubs, students are expected to gain knowledge, skills, and innovative thinking to tackle real-life problems brought about by climate change.

These clubs are more than just extracurricular activities.

They are spaces where curiosity meets action. Students will also be exposed to exploring science, technology, engineering, and mathematics as practical tools for solving everyday challenges, from muddy and damaged roads to destroyed homes and environmental degradation.

For students like Mike, this opportunity represents more than learning, it represents hope.

Instead of feeling helpless when disaster strikes, they will begin to ask questions like why is this happening and what can we do differently to protect our communities.

And most importantly, they will begin to believe that their ideas matter.

The importance of Climate STEM Clubs cannot be overstated. In a country like Malawi, where communities are increasingly affected by extreme weather, empowering young people with practical knowledge is key to building resilience.

These students are not just learners, they are future innovators, problem-solvers, and leaders.

MUST HOSTS UK TEAM

By Justice Ndau

MUST on March 12 hosted a delegation from Imperial College London and University of Cambridge, marking an important milestone in strengthening international academic collaboration.

The visit follows a growing partnership with MUST through the Earth Sciences Department in the Ndata School of Climate and Earth Sciences.

The collaboration focuses largely on critical minerals, which play a key role in global technological development and transition to sustainable energy.

Among the expected outcomes of this partnership is the establishment of a Centre for Sustainable Minerals and Mining at MUST.

Among others, the centre will promote research, innovation, and responsible management of mineral resources, particularly critical minerals that are essential for modern technologies.

The collaboration will also support development of a Master's programme in Earth Resource Governance, aimed at training professionals who can lead in sustainable and responsible management of natural resources.

This partnership highlights MUST's commitment to advancing research, innovation, and global partnerships, positioning the university as a key contributor to knowledge and solutions in the critical minerals sector.

THE MEANING BEHIND THE MUST LOGO

By Mary Mwambongo

The MUST logo stands as a powerful symbol of our identity, proudly carrying our name and reflecting who we are as an institution.

Our logo is more than a design, it tells the story of what MUST stands for and the values that guide our journey in education, science, arts and innovation.

The gear represents applied science and technology, reminding us that knowledge at MUST goes beyond theory and is used to solve real-world challenges and drive innovation.

The book represents education, symbolizing learning, discovery, and the pursuit of knowledge that empowers students to transform their lives and their communities.

The molecular model represents science, reflecting curiosity, research, and scientific thinking that pushes boundaries and creates solutions for society.

Together, these symbols express the true spirit of MUST, where science, education, and technology come together to shape the future

DRM STUDENTS INTERACT WITH IOM OFFICIALS

By Eddie Kamcholoti

On March 11, 2026, MUST students studying Disaster Risk Management (DRM) had an interactive session with officials from International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The IOM national shelter officer, Innocent Chalera, provided the students with first hand practical insights into complexities of conflict, displacement and resettlement within Malawian context.

He also delved into the "human mobility and climate change nexus," equipping the future professionals with the tools to navigate Malawi's evolving humanitarian landscape.

The session centred on the reality that climate change is no longer just an environmental issue but a primary driver of how and why people move.

Students also explored how Malawians are affected by internal and disaster displacement, caused by sudden floods and cyclones, and labour migration with planned relocation as a long-term adaptation strategy.

It also showed that human mobility is both a consequence and a form of loss and damage affecting everything from community cohesion and mental health to economic stability.

Discussions also covered how migration reshapes key sectors in Malawi, including agriculture, water security, and urbanization.

A major focus was placed on finding sustainable ways to support displaced populations through restoring access to land and livelihoods, and ensuring that human mobility is integrated into national Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and climate strategies.

"I encourage the significance of linking international organizations with academic institutions to address real-world challenges. Bridging the gap between classroom theory and on the ground realities is important for preparing for the next generation of professionals," said Chalera.

He identified a major gap in migration data and hailed the partnership with the Centre for Disaster Risk Management at MUST, which "opens doors for critical research regarding drought induced displacement".

He said now students will have the opportunity to be linked with IOM's displacement tracking matrix unit.

DRM part-time lecturer, Maynard Nyirenda, thanked IOM for accepting to come to MUST and share practical insights on conflict displacement and resettlement in Malawi.

He said such sessions motivate students who aspire to be professionals in DRM.

Gabriel Ng'ambi, a student, said engaging with practitioners provided a much needed reality check.

"As students we know the theory but we don't know the reality on the ground," he said.

MUST TO COLLABORATE WITH ITALY'S PALERMO UNIVERSITY

By Jessie Fundudwa

Officials from MUST on March 10 held a meeting with Professor Salvatore Mancuso of Italy's Palermo University to explore areas of possible collaboration.

This is the third Italian university MUST will be working with under the Italian government's WAGON2Africa (WAter enerGy fOod Nexus 2 Africa), a 2024–2026 initiative funded by Italy's PNRR to build a sustainable research and education network between Italian and African universities.

Coordinated by the Politecnico di Torino, the project focuses on the Water-Energy-Food Nexus (WEFN), promoting academic mobility and capacity building in Sub-Saharan and Eastern Africa.

Key aspects of WAGON2Africa include partnership that involves 10 Italian universities, focusing advancing sustainability in agri-food, natural resources, tech, and economics.

Activities under the initiative include supporting mobility and developing training modules with the goal of establishing long-term cooperation and laying groundwork for double-degree programmes.

Under the initiative, MUST already collaborates with universities of Bari and Foggia.

During the meeting at MUST campus in Thyolo, Vice Chancellor Professor Address Malata said such collaborations are critical for internationalisation and urged the teams working on the program to explore more areas of collaboration.

"On our part, we will put strategic people in the team to ensure that the whole university is represented and these will make submissions to the university representatives that will travel to Italy in May so that they can represent MUST as a whole," she said.

Professor Malata also called for action during the collaboration, saying many a times nothing much is done beyond the signing of collaboration documents.

In his speech, Professor Mancuso said his university is positioning itself in Africa as it looks at global north and global south relationships.

"I encourage the MUST team to go on the Palermo University website and understand the university so that as they travel to Italy, they have a clear picture of the potential areas of collaboration. I would also appreciate if I can be advised in advance of these areas so I can put up a team of relevant authorities or experts for fruitful discussions during the visit," he said.

Apart from the face-to-face meeting which also included presentation from both sides, Professor Mancuso also toured some facilities at MUST and held a meeting with the university student leadership.

MUST HOSTS ZBS PANEL DISCUSSION ON WOMEN IN STEM

By Jacqueline Makhenjera

On March 10, 2026, female scientists, leaders, and students from MUST took part in a fascinating panel discussion organised by and aired on Zodiak Broadcasting Station's (ZBS) radio, TV and social media platforms.

Dubbed "From vision to impact: Refining STEM by closing the gender gap," the event, moderated by Chisomo Nyirenda, was hosted at MUST's campus in Thyolo and included lively discussions about experiences, opportunities, challenges, and ways to enhance women's participation in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

Malawi's advancements in STEM promotion were praised by MUST Vice Chancellor Professor Address Malata, who was one of the panellists.

"Technical colleges and universities are working to increase female enrolment. Female enrolment at MUST is around 40 percent for both regular and technical disciplines. Although better than how we started, it is way below our aspirations," she said.

She said these females are enrolled on the strength of their good grades, and not just to make the numbers.

Professor Malata also shared her personal experience as a female STEM graduate currently in charge of MUST, along with other successful women in leadership roles, saying this was a demonstration that girls can also excel in STEM.

"Much as our experiences and positions are enough to inspire and motivate girls, let us also find time to mentor our girls. This is a challenge I give to all my colleagues by asking them to identify some girls and mentor them. We need to be intentional on this," she said.

"Despite the gaps, seeing those few girls in science classes and women like us holding big roles, there is real progress."

Another panellist, Dr Linda Chokotho, a medical doctor, senior lecturer and leadership representative, emphasized the importance of inclusivity, saying women should be included in everything since as they are the most vulnerable.

"Do not allow doubt to limit your dreams," she advised ladies.

To emphasise the importance of women in modern technologies, Dr Priscilla Maliwichi, an ICT expert and lecturer at MUST, said women need to understand AI to improve their surroundings.

"Collaboration is key. Work hand in hand with men and even those in non-STEM fields like arts," she advised.

Esther Mabedi, an earth science expert and lecturer at MUST, highlighted the importance of including women in environmental projects as they are the most affected through challenges they face on daily resource management, implications on family health, and vulnerabilities at community level like water scarcity or climate change.

In response to the lack of exposure to computer science, Omega Misomali, a student, described it as "an exciting programme" that allows her to use her imagination to create a variety of products including websites.

Regarding cyberbullying, she said if women truly understood data, they wouldn't back bullying their fellow women.

Shalom Amilusi, another student, said there is a significant STEM divide in Malawi because there are relatively few girls enrolled in STEM programmes such as Medical Imaging. However, she was pleased to see other female STEM leaders and role models.

To close gaps, the panel urged exposure, mentoring, teamwork, and inspiration.

FST SELLS VALUE ADDITION PROPOSAL TO VC

By Eddie Kamcholoti

The Food Science and Technology (FST) team at MUST on March 9, 2026, presented an ambitious project to start food processing as part of entrepreneurship and industrialisation as espoused by Malawi's long term development blueprint, Malawi 2063.

The team comprising technicians, lecturers, HoD and Executive Dean for the Malawi Institute of Technology, showcased sample products to the university's Vice Chancellor, Professor Address Malata.

The products included mango, pineapple and guava juices plus tamarind and guava jam.

According to one of the FST lecturers, Dr Barton Navicha, the idea was to showcase potential and capacity within the section for agri-products value chains and ask the university management to support their industrialisation initiative.

"If you recall, just a week ago, we had a training on the production of fruit juices and jams targeting students so they could put theory into practice. However, the section has plans to go into serious production of various agri-food products. The aim is to add value to our agricultural products, contribute to Malawi's import substitution initiatives, create jobs and bring forex," he said.

To achieve this, Dr Navicha said the section needs to set up a factory with modern equipment and that

needs financial injection and support from the university or partners.

In response, Professor Malata was excited and asked the university's Directorate of Finance and Investments to support the initiative.

"The team is also coming just days after we met the Minister of Agriculture, Honourable Roza Mbilizi who challenged universities to go into industrialisation, agriculture mechanisation and seed production and assured us that the ministry is ready to support with financial resources. So this is one of the things we will push for support from the ministry as we also look into agriculture mechanisation and seed production," said Professor Malata.

Meanwhile, the Vice Chancellor encouraged the FST team to continue with production at small scale level so as not to lose the momentum and also to build a customer base for the products.

Earlier on March 4, 2026, MUST heralded a new chapter as Food Science and Technology students began a three-day practical training session in fruit juice and jam production.

The initiative marks an important milestone in integrating classroom theory with practical application.

The primary facilitator of the training, Jamitoni Korinto, Senior Research Attendant and Machine Technician at Chitedze Research Station, outlined a three-phase production process that begins with equipment installation, followed by production, and concludes with value addition.

“In order to ensure success, I advise paying close attention to safety, hygiene, and the science underlying each operation,” he said.

Senior Lecturer Dr Burton Navicha, who is team leader of the project, hailed the training and described it as a game changer in equipping students with practical skills in innovation, agribusiness, and sustainability.

According to Dr Navicha, the programme aims to promote entrepreneurship, encourage healthy lifestyles, and provide hands-on learning opportunities.

"The initiative could also serve as a hub for student innovation in the juice and jam industry," he said.

On environmental sustainability, Dr Navicha said seeds extracted during processing will be used to grow seedlings for planting, making the project environmentally friendly and self-sustaining in the long term.

Lawrence Lipikwa, a student, described the project as eye-opening and a major success.

He especially liked the training's focus on low-cost production techniques, food safety, and food preservation, while effectively blending classroom knowledge with practical technical skills and clear communication methods.

TAGDEV 2.0, ATSIKANA WALANI GIRLS TECHNICAL COLLEGE PEN MoU

By Justice Ndau

Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) through the Transforming African Agricultural Universities to meaningfully contribute to Africa's Growth and Development (TAGDEV 2.0) program, on March 5, 2026 signed an MoU with Atsikana Walani Girls Technical College.

The MoU with the college managed by the Moravian Humanitarian Development Services (MOHDEVS), seeks to support girls technical and vocational training in specific areas that promote entrepreneurship and job creation.

The TAGDEV 2.0, a partnership between Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agricture (RUFORUM) and Mastercard Foundation, seeks to build skills among young females (70 percent), internally displaced people and refugees (25 percent) and differently abled people (10 percent).

Speaking during the signing ceremony held at Atsikana Walani Girls Technical College in Lilongwe, MOHDEVS Executive Director Jonna Sinyangwe said the MoU will help expand opportunities for girls.

He said the college focuses on empowering disadvantaged girls, including refugees, appreciated the technical support the TAGDEV 2.0 program will bring.

"The aim is to change lives for disadvantaged young girls for the better. We pride ourselves as being transparent, respectful and welcoming. We have already briefed our other partners about this and they too are excited and we see us together expanding our collaboration going forward," said Sinyangwe.

TAGDEV 2.0 program Entrepreneurship and Business Development Manager Dr Bonnet Kamwana, said through the MoU, the program will support marginalized young girls who often face barriers in accessing skills training.

He said under the program, MUST is working with several partners at different levels to ensure that its reach is wider.

"Atsikana Walani is the first technical college we are working with formally but we will be expanding to cover others. Already, we are discussing with TEVETA to hasten this process. We are also working with other universities such as LUANAR, MZUNI and UNILIA," he said.

LUANAR, through Associate Professor Tinna Manani and Dr Vincent Mgoli Mwale, attended the MoU signing ceremony as they too have an interest in TAGDEV 2.0 activities.

TAGDEV 2.0 is an Africa wide program implemented by 12 universities across the continent and in Malawi, MUST is the lead.

Earlier on the same day, TAGDEV 2.0 program led a tree planting exercise at Dzaleka Refugee Camp in Dowa, Central Malawi.

The exercise, that saw 1,500 tree seedlings being planted on the bare Dzaleka Hill, in religious compounds, homes and other institutions, was done in partnership with TAGDEV 2.0 partners: Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) and Moravian Humanitarian Development Services (MOHDEVS) on one hand and the camp's management team.

According to TAGDEV 2.0 program coordinator, Dr Petros Chigwechokha, the 1,500 seedlings are part of over 17,000 trees the program has planted this year in collaboration with LUANAR, which raised over 15,000 tree seedlings under the program, and other partners such as Mzuzu University (MZUNI) and University of Livingstonia (UNILIA).

Speaking at the event, MUST Vice Chancellor representative, Dr Chikondi Chisenga, who is also Executive Dean for Ndata School of Climate and Earth Sciences, said the TAGDEV 2.0 believes in empowering disadvantaged groups and apart from offering them scholarship for higher education studies, trainings and other capacity building initiatives for entrepreneurship and employability, they also support efforts to address climate change effects as they affect agriculture and other livelihoods.

Dowa District Commissioner representative Bissai Mtayamanja hailed the TAGDEV 2.0 program for the initiative, saying the increased population at the camp has brought with it huge pressure for fuelwood and farm land, leading to heavy environmental degradation.

"We have serious deforestation around the camp and neighbouring areas such as Kongwe and Dzaleka hills. We need your support in re-forestating these areas. Otherwise, the situation is getting out of hand," he said.

Nduwimana Nasoro, one of the camp community leaders, said they are ready to work with any organisations that support climate change mitigation efforts within and around the camp.

"Last year, several houses had their roofs blown off by strong winds because the place here is bare. We appreciate that government alone cannot do everything and with the downscaling of UNHCR activities here, we call on other stakeholders to come in and support and we pledge our cooperation," he said.

Commissioner for Refugees, General Ignancio Maulana (Retired), said while they support and appreciate the tree planting exercises, they would like to urge stakeholders involved to ensure they have mechanisms to ensure survival of the trees.

"Trees are planted but very little is done to make sure that they are looked after for high survival rate. I call upon TAGDEV and others to make sure they have an arrangement for the care of the trees after the planting. We would also welcome more support in tree planting exercises as the problem is huge here. The camp was supposed to hold 12,000 people but we now have around 60,000 refugees and the implications on the environment are dire," he said.

LUANAR Deputy Vice Chancellor representative, Dr Tinna Manani hailed the collaborative approach to the exercise, saying her university will continue to work with institutions that promote national development and improved livelihoods among disadvantaged groups.

YOUNG INNOVATORS GRADUATE FROM ADDA CLIMATE INCUBATION TRAINING

By Mary Mwambongo

The African Drone and Data Academy (ADDA) at MUST held its 7th graduation ceremony on March 6, 2026, at MUST's Thyolo campus.

The ceremony marked the successful completion of a six-day training program aimed at equipping young people with knowledge and practical skills related to climate change.

A total of 23 students aged between 17 and 25 from Salima and Dowa districts participated in the training.

The program focused on helping young people understand climate change and develop innovative solutions that can help communities adapt to environmental challenges.

During the training, the students worked in groups to develop projects designed to address climate-related problems.

Some of the projects presented included Smart Greenhouse, Smart Nsangu Compost, Water Harvesting and Irrigation, and

Smart Solar-Watered Irrigation Farming.

These innovations aim to promote sustainable agriculture and improve water management in communities affected by climate change.

Upon successfully completing the training, all participants received certificates in Climate Incubation, recognizing the knowledge and skills they gained during the program.

Speaking during the ceremony, ADDA Programs Manager Emmanuel Chinkaka commended the students for their active participation throughout the training.

He encouraged them to apply the knowledge and skills they acquired to help address climate change challenges in their communities.

Chinkaka also urged the graduates to become good ambassadors of MUST, emphasizing the university's commitment to promoting science, innovation, and community development.

He further expressed appreciation to the instructors for their dedication and hard work in guiding the students during the training, noting that working with participants from different backgrounds required patience and commitment.

Speaking on behalf of the graduates, Charlotte Chimweta, thanked the organizers for providing them with the opportunity to participate in the training.

She expressed gratitude for the knowledge and practical skills they gained and pledged to use them to contribute to solutions that address climate change challenges in their communities.

ADDA continues to play an important role in empowering young people with innovative technological skills that support environmental sustainability and climate resilience.

MUST RECONSTITUTES MEF BOARD

By Gerald Kanono

MUST recently reconstituted the board of the MUST Endowment Fund (MEF).

The development saw the previous board, led by Mr Emmanuel Chapo, being replaced by a new board chaired by Ms Thokozile Kuwali.

Apart from Ms Kuwali, the new MEF board members also include Mr Masauko Katsala of National Bank and Mr Moses Khabvilhiro of MCCCI.

The outgoing MEF board chairperson, Mr Chapo, on February 26, 2026 held an official handover ceremony of the trust deed to his predecessor.

According to MUST Vice Chancellor, Professor Address Malata, the handover symbolised transfer of power between the two chairpersons and the board members.

MUST established the MEF in 2021 to raise money through donations from well-wishers and institutions of good will to support its activities, including offering scholarships to needy students.

The idea is to use the money collected for investment and only use a fraction of the interest earned so that the funding is sustained in perpetuity.

Already, the MEF now boasts of a fund in excess of K6 billion with Illovo Sugar Malawi, NBM, FDH Bank, Standard Bank, MUST and others as major sponsors.

The MEF last year started supporting needy students and this year more will be supported as more investments mature and the interest earned increase.

In between, MUST has also established MUST Scholars Fund/Foundation targeting the diaspora, especially in the USA and MUST Ventures Limited (MVL), a holding company to champion entrepreneurship and industrialisation within the university.

MUST HOSTS MDF COLLEGE STUDENTS

By Eddie Kamcholoti

MUST on February 27, 2026 hosted students from the Malawi Defence Force (MDF) Command and Staff College to strengthen collaboration and appreciate the university's innovative work.

Welcoming the delegation, MUST Vice Chancellor, Professor Address Malata, highlighted the university's mission of delivering education that solves real-world problems.

She explained that programmes such as Geo Information Science

help address environmental, agricultural, and urban challenges in Malawi and beyond.

Professor Malata also clarified misconceptions about Indigenous Knowledge Systems, emphasizing that the programme is academic and solution-oriented, with a strong focus on open-source innovation.

She further shared that MUST is developing solutions in areas such as pharmaceutical manufacturing and advancing medical research, with some graduates currently studying abroad to specialize in cancer treatment.

The Vice Chancellor also outlined the university's strategic plan, which focuses on academic excellence, technological innovation, and creating an enabling environment where every student develops solutions that benefit society.

She noted infrastructure challenges, including limited student hostels and staff housing, and shared the university's vision of expanding through additional campuses to improve access for students across the country.

Professor Malata concluded by expressing her commitment to strengthening collaboration with MDF and commended the college for attracting participants from countries such as Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and Zambia.

College Commandant Major General Vincent Peter Moyo thanked MUST for the warm reception and strong partnership, describing the university as "a heart of excellence."

One of the students, Paul Hare Kamwendo, also expressed gratitude, saying the delegation felt welcomed and appreciated.

During the visit, the MDF Command and Staff College students toured key facilities, including the African Drone and Data Academy's laboratory and assembly site, the Design Studio, teaching hospital, and ceramics workshop.

MUST HOSTS INTERFACE MEETING WITH UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

By Fanuel Msiska

MUST on 19 February, hosted an interface meeting with the University of Glasgow (UofG) at its Thyolo campus.

The meeting was aimed at discussing a new collaborative research project on disaster preparedness and response.

It focused on the project titled "Bridging Malawi's Spatial Data Gap: Validating Geospatial Tools for Inclusive Disaster Preparedness and Response."

Supported through the UofG's GCID Small Grants Fund, the project aims to strengthen inclusive early warning systems and improve use of geospatial technologies in disaster response, particularly in disaster-prone areas such as Nsanje District.

During the meeting, Dr Jiren Xu, Director of Research at the School of Social and Environmental Sustainability at UofG and Principal Investigator of the project, presented the goals, scope, and expected impact of the research.

He also provided an overview of the UofG and highlighted

areas for long-term collaboration between the two institutions.

Representing MUST, Steven Gondwe, Co-Principal Investigator of the project, delivered a presentation about MUST and ongoing research on validating Machine Learning algorithms for improving disaster response and Early Warning.

He highlighted key initiatives such as the African Drone and Data Academy (ADDA), which demonstrates MUST's leadership in data science and emerging technologies in Africa.

The interface meeting provided an opportunity for researchers and staff from MUST to engage in discussions, ask questions, and identify further areas of collaboration.

It strengthened mutual understanding and reinforced the shared commitment to using research and innovation to address real challenges facing communities in Malawi.

After the meeting, the visiting team toured the MUST campus, including selected facilities and laboratories.

The visit not only deepened the partnership between MUST and UofG but also marked another important step in advancing international research collaboration focused on building safer and more resilient communities.

TAGDEV 2.0 SCHOLARS RECEIVE GADGETS, BRIEFED ON ACADEMIC ASSESSMENTS

By Justice Ndau

Eleven students studying at the Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) under TAGDEV 2.0 scholarships on February 6, 2026 received laptops and their bags to help them with their academic works.

Presenting the items, TAGDEV 2.0 Associate Program Coordinator, Dr Cecilia Maliwichi Nyirenda also hailed the interaction between the scholars and the program team, saying there was need for more engagements to share successes and challenges and jointly finding solutions.

"You are TAGDEV 2.0 program ambassadors as the first cohort of students under the program scholarships and the team is here is there to support your academic journey," she said.

Dr Nyirenda also encouraged the students to save part of their scholarship money and engage in some entrepreneurial activity as the program promotes.

"Next year there is an opportunity for you to showcase some of your enterprises at an international forum and we would want you to have very competitive enterprises. We have experts to help you on this entrepreneurial journey," she added, while encouraging them to use the gadgets for the intended purpose.

Apart from receiving the gadgets and interacting with the TAGDEV 2.0 Program team, the students were reminded about the university's assessments rules and regulations, emphasising that the rules apply to all students, including the TAGDEV scholars.

One of the scholars, Sabina Kalimu, a first year Bachelor of Science in Food Science and Technology student, was very thankful for the laptops and the presentation on assessment rules and regulations.

"We will look after the gadgets so that they serve us throughout our studies. We have to admit that first semester was challenging with the many adjustments needed, especially for some of us who stayed home for some years without being in class.

However, going forward, expect improved performance as we are now settled and have adapted to the rigours of academic life," said Sabina, speaking on behalf of her undergraduate and postgraduate colleagues.

At the end of the interaction, the two sides enjoyed a meal together as part of bonding. More meetings have been planned to ensure that the scholars have a smooth academic ride.

TAGDEV 2.0 SUPPORTS POLICY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES AT MUST

By Justice Ndau

The TAGDEV 2.0 program at MUST recently supported development of two critical policies for the university. The developed policies are on community engagement and digital economy.

The two-day policy development sessions run concurrently in Mulanje but involved two different teams.

TAGDEV 2.0 Associate Program Coordinator, Dr Cecelia Maliwichi Nyirenda, said the program came in to support the policy development process following a request from the university and after noting how critical the two were to university operations.

"TAGDEV 2.0 program, among others, is there to transform systems that would help the university to grow and the two policies were very critical. For example, the community engagement policy is very important as it maps out the university's stakeholders and how the university can engage with them on different issues, including on research," she said.

She said after the development process, the policies will be handed over to university management for the approval protocols before implementation.

TAGDEV 2.0 program at MUST comprises of two components of scholarship and system transformation on one hand and agri-food systems and entrepreneurship centre (ASEC) on the other.

Under the first component, it provides undergraduate and postgraduate scholarships to disadvantaged groups, targeting 70 percent young women, 10 percent differently abled people and 25 percent internally displaced people and refugees.

It is also responsible for policy and systems development support.

Under ASEC, implemented in partnership with Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) Mzuzu University (MZUNI) and University of Livingstonia (UNILIA), it enhances and operationalises agri-preneurship and business development skills among young women and men.

It also operates a robust, sustainable youth and women centred viable agri-enterprise incubation program, and develops climate smart maize and soybean community-based value chain systems that promote entrepreneurship, research and institutional capacity for agro-processors to foster an agribusiness upscaling, networking and partnership.

A TEARCHER'S DREAM BEYOND THE CLASSROM

By Mary Mwambongo

Nicholus Thombozi, a 25-year-old primary school teacher at Chitawira Primary School in Blantyre, is a powerful proof that youths can play a powerful role in solving climate and development challenges when given the right opportunity.

Beyond the classroom, Nicholus is an Arts Administrator at the Youth Developers Collaboration Theatre and a youth leader for Soche Youth Club, roles that reflect his passion for community development and youth empowerment.

In 2024, Nicholus joined the Climate and Incubation Program at MUST's African Drone and Data Academy (ADDA).

He was selected based on his innovative idea, the Ulalo Waste Management Project, which focuses on improving waste management in Blantyre and promoting a cleaner, healthier urban environment.

After successfully completing the training, Nicholus and other participants from the 2024 cohort were recently called back by ADDA to further develop the projects they had presented.

The invitation marked the beginning of the prototype phase, a critical step in turning ideas into practical solutions.

Nicholus describes the moment he was called back as overwhelming, saying it was a great opportunity to learn more, gain hands-on experience, and grow his confidence as a young innovator.

Working with two friends under the group name Green Getters, Nicholus developed a digital solution called Ulimi Digital Plus.

The application is designed to support farmers by providing timely and reliable weather forecasts, helping them prepare better and make informed farming decisions.

The platform also includes a marketplace feature that connects farmers directly with potential buyers.

Through this feature, farmers will be able to advertise their produce, while buyers can access the information and purchase products easily, strengthening market access and livelihoods.

Reflecting on youth participation in climate-smart solutions, Nicholus believes there is still a long way to go.

He notes that limited resources and lack of commitment among some young people remain major challenges.

However, he strongly encourages fellow youth to stay active and curious.

"Be a jack of all trades," he says, urging young people to continuously acquire new knowledge and skills so they can

meaningfully contribute to national development.

Nicholus expressed gratitude to ADDA and MUST for the opportunity, adding that the knowledge and experience he is gaining will not end with him.

As a youth leader at his school and in the community, he is committed to sharing what he learns with others and inspiring more young people to take part in innovation and climate action.

Speaking on the prototype phase, Racheal Sibale, Lead for the Climate Incubation Unit at ADDA, said ten groups were selected for the prototyping phase of the program after a thorough selection process, and Nicholus's team is among those that qualified.

She said the phase aims to support promising ideas and help young innovators transform them into impactful solutions.

Nicholus's journey is a clear example of how youth-led innovation, when supported by institutions like MUST and ADDA, can drive practical solutions for climate resilience, agriculture, and sustainable development in Malawi.

MUST STRENGTHENS ENERGY PLANNING CAPACITY THROUGH EMP-A PARTICIPATION

By Jessie Fundudwa

MUST has once again strengthened its role in sustainable energy planning and advocacy following its participation in the Energy Modelling Platform for Africa (EMP-A).

EMP-A is a continental initiative led by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the OpTIMUS Community.

The program aims to build energy planning expertise across Africa to support low-carbon, inclusive, and climate-resilient development pathways.

This year's EMP-A program was held from 19 January to 6 February at University of Cape Town (UCT), South Africa and it

brought together energy professionals and academics from across the continent.

The meeting was sponsored by Climate Compatible Growth (CCG), the World Bank, Africa Energy Futures, and University of Cape Town.

As part of this initiative, MUST was selected for the Flatpack Bootcamp, a capacity-building platform under Climate Compatible Growth that supports universities to integrate open-source energy modelling tools into their curricula.

This will benefit students in Sustainable Energy Engineering and related programmes, strengthening practical skills in energy planning and analysis.

Representing MUST were Dr John Taulo, Head of Energy Resources Management Department, Mr Alfred Kampira, a MUST alumnus, and Mr Anthony Chitete from ESCOM.

The team received training in OSeMOSYS, an open-source energy modelling tool that supports long-term energy system planning.

The project at MUST is coordinated by the Department of Energy Resources Management.

During the program, Mr Kampira, who is also a part-time lecturer at MUST, presented a research paper, titled "Planning Malawi's Resource Future: A CLEWs-Based Assessment."

The study was selected for a high-level presentation and ranked among the top three presentations under the Climate, Land, Energy and Water Systems track.

MUST's selection for the Flatpack Bootcamp positions it among a few institutions in Africa contributing to advanced energy planning education.

The integration of open-source tools such as OSeMOSYS is expected to benefit students, energy institutions, and national planning efforts, reinforcing MUST's commitment to sustainable development and innovation.

MUST SHOWCASES INNOVATION AT EDUCATION JSR

By Gerald Kanono

MUST was one of the exhibitors at the recent annual Education Joint Sector Review meeting held in Lilongwe on February 3 and 4.

Organised by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology under the theme of

"Achieving education sector results through reforms: Ensuring efficient and sustainable financing for improved learning outcomes", the meeting attracted a wide range of stakeholders from the education sector.

It was opened by the Minister of Education, Science and Technology, Bright Msaka.

Among others, MUST showcased students' innovations, drone and drone technologies from its African Drone and Data Academy (ADDA) plus brochures on its various academic programmes and their requirements and the TAGDeV programme.

ADDA runs two level trainings for drone pilots and data technology experts and offers other services through its different units such as the emergency response unit and climate and incubation unit, among others.

On the other hand, the students showed their Mavericks Automated CPAP (MACPAP), a low-fidelity, proof-of-concept prototype aimed at improving the care of premature babies with breathing difficulties.

The prototype demonstrates how automated regulation of air and oxygen flow can be achieved within a CPAP circuit and was designed to adjust the oxygen–air mixture to preset levels with minimal manual input from healthcare workers.

When he toured the MUST booth, Msaka was appreciative of the innovations and disclosed that he has planned a visit to the university to appreciate its activities and programmes.

YOUNG MALAWIAN FINDS PURPOSE, OPPORTUNITY THROUGH DRONE TRAINING AT MUST

By Mary Mwambongo

For 23-year-old Hope Matemba from Thyolo District, joining the Certificate in Drone and Data Technology (CDDT2) at the African Drone and Data Academy (ADDA) at MUST has been a life-changing opportunity that is opening new doors in technology and innovation.

Hope is among the students who underwent a training at ADDA, a centre of excellence based at MUST, which equips young people with practical skills in drone technology and data applications to solve real-world challenges.

Speaking about his experience, Hope said the training progressed very well and was made a strong impact on his personal and professional growth.

"One of the exciting things for me is meeting fellow students from different districts. We are learning together and sharing ideas. I also appreciate the supportive instructors at ADDA," he said.

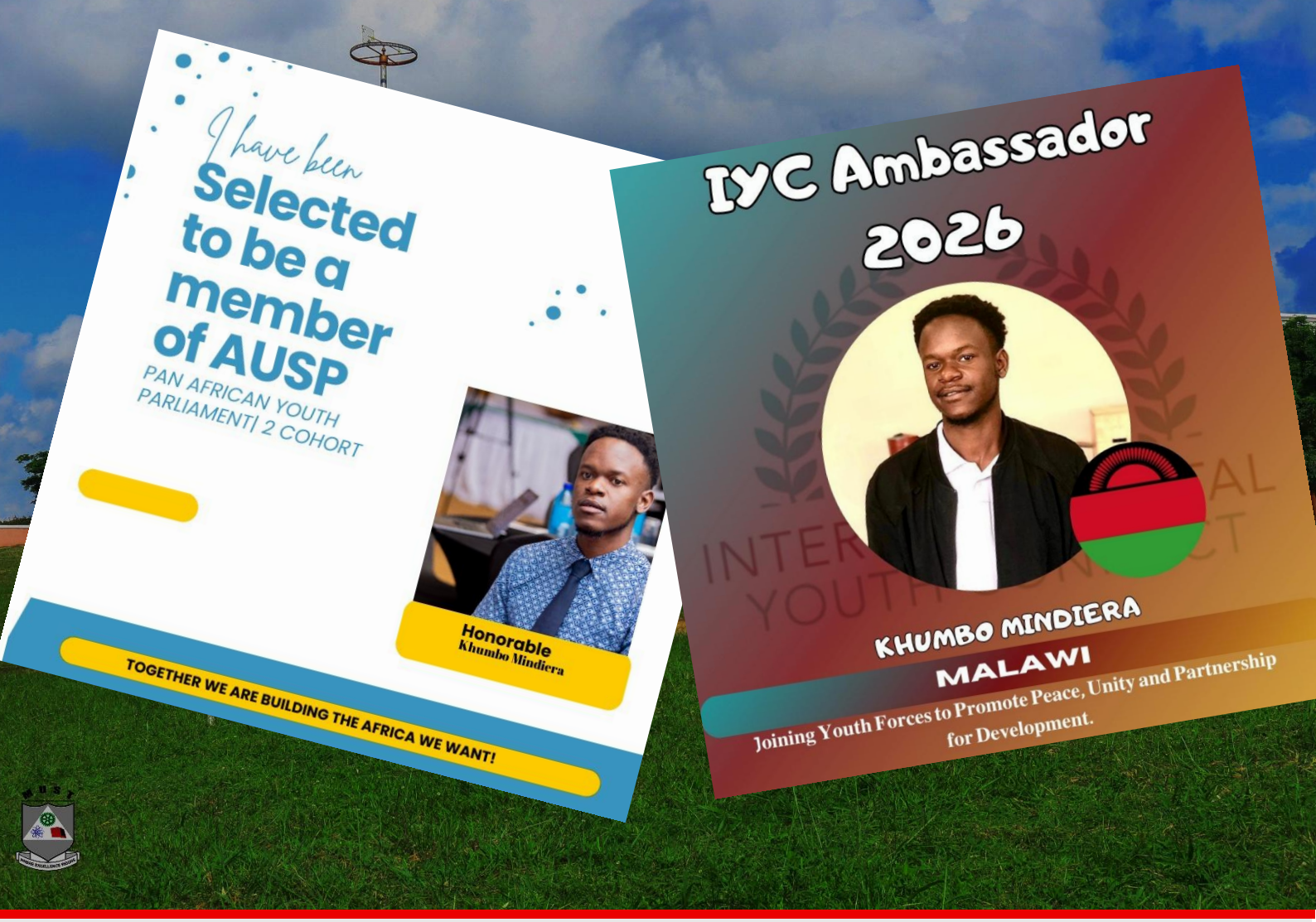
He added that the hands-on field sessions helped him understand drones better, allowing him to gain real practical experience beyond classroom theory.

ADDA plays a critical role in preparing Malawian youth for the future by providing industry-relevant training in drone operations, data collection, and analysis.

The three-weeks training commenced on the 19th of January 2026 and concluded on 6th of February 2026.

Through its programs, the Academy empowers young people with digital and technical skills that support agriculture, disaster management, environmental monitoring, and national development.

As MUST continues to invest in science, innovation, and skills development, ADDA stands as a shining example of how the University is creating pathways for young Malawians to thrive in emerging technologies and contribute meaningfully to their communities.



MUST ALUMNUS APPOINTED INTO PAN-AFRICAN YOUTH LEADERSHIP

By Eddie Kamcholoti

A MUST alumnus, Khumbo Mindiera, has achieved a major milestone in his journey of youth leadership and innovation after being appointed as member of the AUSP Youth Parliament (Cohort 2), a Pan-African youth leadership body under the African Union.

Through this role, Khumbo will contribute to youth policy dialogue and continental advocacy, working with young leaders from across Africa to shape policies that support sustainable development and youth empowerment.

In addition, Khumbo is currently serving as the National Ambassador for Malawi at Intercontinental Youth Connect (IYC), where he supports youth mobilization, leadership development, and Pan-African cooperation.

These appointments follow his earlier recognition during the AYuTe Africa Challenge Malawi, further highlighting his growing impact in youth development and innovation.

A graduate of Biomedical Engineering from MUST, Khumbo credits the university for laying a strong foundation for his success.

He says his time at MUST shaped his approach to problem-solving, systems thinking, and innovation, especially in low-resource settings.

"MUST exposed me to hands-on learning and multidisciplinary collaboration. It pushed me to look beyond theory and ask how technology can truly serve people and communities. This mindset directly influenced my innovation work, research engagements, and leadership roles today," he said.

MUST congratulates Khumbo on these outstanding achievements and celebrates him as a shining example of how the university continues to produce graduates who lead, innovate, and make meaningful contributions at national, continental, and global levels.

MUST STUDENT INSPIRES ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE THROUGH CAREER TALK

By Jessie Fundudwa

A second-year Medical Microbiology student at MUST, Francis Nkhoma, has taken the initiative to give back to his former secondary school by motivating learners towards academic excellence and higher education.

As an alumnus of Hope Green Light Secondary School in Lilongwe, Francis recently visited the school to engage Forms 3 and 4 students in a career talk and academic excellence session.

The session was aimed at encouraging learners to work hard and consider MUST as their preferred institution for tertiary education.

During the visit, Francis shared his personal academic journey, highlighting how dedication and discipline helped him achieve 12 points in 2022, earning him a place at MUST.

He also introduced students to the various programmes offered at the university, emphasizing MUST's role as one of Malawi's most innovative higher learning institutions.

The session covered key topics, including career guidance, study strategies, time management, innovation, and university life.

Francis encouraged students to remain focused on their goals and reassured them that success is achievable through hard work and commitment.

Tadala Banda, a Form 4 student, expressed interest in pursuing a science-related career and said the session opened her eyes to opportunities in STEM.

The school's headteacher, Mr James Chawanda, praised the initiative, describing it as timely and impactful.

He noted that the session sparked motivation for career development and university progression while providing practical guidance on study strategies and networking.

Francis said he felt humbled by the positive response from both teachers and learners, adding that he hopes more MUST students and alumni could reach out to schools to inspire the next generation.

MUST SUPPORTS DISASTER PREPAREDNESS THROUGH PARTICIPATORY MAPPING EXERCISE IN SALIMA

By Mary Mwambongo

The African Drone and Data Academy (ADDA) at MUST recently conducted a three-day participatory mapping exercise in Salima District aimed at strengthening community disaster preparedness and reducing the impact of natural hazards.

Held from 28 to 30 January 2026, the exercise took place in Traditional Authority Kambwiri, covering Ngolomi 1 and Katsichi villages. It brought together community members, MUST/ADDA staff, MUST graduates, and students to develop detailed community maps and Disaster Risk Management (DRM) plans to support local DRM planning.

The initiative sought to mitigate the effects of natural disasters by producing accurate community maps and DRM plans that will assist the Salima District Council, local communities, and other stakeholders in planning, response, and decision-making.

Using drone technology, the team collected aerial data to identify flood-prone areas. MUST graduates and students also used GPS devices to map key community features such as water points, churches, bridges, evacuation centres, mosques, clinics, and schools across the two Group Village Headships (GVHs). This data will be integrated with drone imagery to produce detailed risk maps.

The mapping exercise further aimed to outline high-risk zones and provide visual evidence of areas frequently affected by floods, supporting efforts to improve early warning systems, preparedness strategies, and long-term community resilience.

The activity was led by Agnes Hamisi, an instructor and Geospatial Emergency Officer at ADDA, who coordinated the field team comprising ADDA staff, MUST graduates, and students.

Speaking on the importance of community involvement, Hamisi said community members actively contributed through a participatory mapping approach, supporting the development of DRM plans and risk maps.

"Their local knowledge played a vital role in ensuring the DRM plans and maps reflect real community needs and risks," she said.

MUST RESEARCHERS APPOINTED COUNTRY AMBASSADORS FOR PHAGEAFRICA

By Justice Ndau

Two researchers from Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) have been appointed as Malawi's Ambassador and Deputy Ambassador for PhageAfrica.

Associate Professor Gama Bandawe will serve as Country Ambassador, while Ms Evelyn Mwangomba has been named Deputy Ambassador.

PhageAfrica is the new name of the Africa Phage Forum (APF), a continental network of researchers working in bacteriophage research.

The network brings together undergraduate students, postgraduate trainees, and established scientists to promote collaboration, mentorship, and the growth of phage research across Africa.

Bacteriophages, or phages, are viruses that infect and kill bacteria.

They are the most abundant life forms on Earth and play a critical role in controlling bacterial populations.

Importantly, lytic phages are being explored as alternatives to antibiotics in the fight against antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

AMR is a major public health threat with the World Health Organization warning that it could become the next global pandemic.

In Malawi alone, thousands of deaths each year are directly or indirectly linked to drug-resistant infections.

The problem is worsened by misuse of antibiotics in human health, animal production, and environmental contamination, making AMR a serious One Health challenge.

In response, the university established the MUST Bacteriophage Research Unit (MBRU) aimed at advancing phage research in Malawi, develop the country's first phage bank, and ultimately conduct clinical trials in phage therapy for antibiotic-resistant infections.

Phages also offer solutions for controlling resistant bacteria in poultry farms and the environment.

Associate Professor Bandawe, Coordinator of the Centre for Clinical and Biological Sciences Research under MUST's Academy of Medical Sciences, leads the initiative.

Ms Mwangomba, a laboratory technician at Mzuzu Central Hospital and a recent MSc graduate in Medical Microbiology from MUST, is an active member of the team.

Her master's research focused on isolating phages targeting methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) from surgical wound infections, and her findings are currently being prepared for publication.

Their appointment as PhageAfrica ambassadors is expected to raise the profile of phage research in Malawi.

It will also support training, workshops, seminars, and stronger regional and global collaborations, helping to mobilize resources, build capacity, and grow a sustainable phage research ecosystem in the country.

YOUTHS EMBRACE DRONE TECHNOLOGY TRAINING AT MUST

By Mary Mwambongo

Dalitso Phiri, a 23-year-old girl from Lilongwe, is among the young people that underwent Level Two of the Certified Drone Data Technician (CDDT2) training at MUST's African Drone and Data Academy (ADDA).

Dalitso said she is excited to be part of the programme, describing it as a life-changing opportunity that is equipping her with practical skills and knowledge in drone technology.

"I enjoyed the training because of the good learning environment, friendly instructors, and the chance to meet new friends," she said.

The cohort had 48 students, drawn from different parts of the country.

Through practical sessions and expert guidance, participants learn how to use drone technology for data collection, mapping, and problem-solving across various sectors.

The training plays a critical role in building Malawi's future workforce by empowering young people with modern digital skills.

Graduates of the programme are expected to contribute to national development in areas such as agriculture, disaster management, environmental monitoring, health, and infrastructure planning.

By investing in youth and emerging technologies, MUST, through ADDA, continues to position Malawi on the global innovation map while nurturing a new generation of tech-savvy professionals ready to support the country's sustainable development goals.

HEALTH MINISTRY ENGAGES MUST ON DRONE TECHNOLOGY

By Mary Mwambongo

On January 23, 2026, MUST, through its African Drone and Data Academy (ADDA), held an interface meeting with a delegation from the Ministry of Health.

The purpose was for the Ministry to seek expert advice from ADDA on suitable drone specifications and human resource requirements for managing drone operations.

The Ministry also expressed interest in having ADDA train its officers in drone technology to ensure effective and safe use of the equipment.

Speaking during the meeting, Oudney Mwale, Deputy Director of Administration and leader of the delegation, said they recently received a grant aimed at strengthening emergency response systems, with drones being a key component of the initiative.

He said the Ministry chose to consult ADDA because of its proven expertise in drone and data technologies.

"We believe that with guidance from ADDA, we will receive valuable recommendations that will help us make informed decisions," said Mwale.

Representing ADDA, Prince Mkango, who is also an instructor, commended the Ministry for taking a proactive step in seeking professional advice.

He noted that the engagement reflects the growing trust stakeholders have in ADDA's capacity.

"This shows confidence in our work. We are committed to supporting the Ministry throughout the process" said Mkango.

Through ADDA's technical support and capacity building, the initiative is expected to enhance preparedness, save lives, and promote the use of modern technology in public service delivery.

MUST ENGAGES EDUCATION AUTHORITIES ON EWS

By Mary Mwambongo

When disasters strike, children are often the most affected.

And to help change this reality, MUST, through its African Drone and Data Academy (ADDA), engaged key stakeholders to strengthen early warning systems (EWS) and disaster preparedness in schools.

As part of this process, on January 20, 2026, MUST held an interface meeting with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology authorities in Mulanje District.

The meeting followed earlier consultations with the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA) and Phalombe District officials.

The engagements are aimed at shaping a practical initiative that will help learners understand risks and respond safely during emergencies.

The meeting brought together Ministry of Education officials and ADDA's Emergency Response Unit to discuss how schools can be empowered to raise awareness among learners on disaster risks, early warning signs, and safety measures.

Speaking during the meeting, Steve Gondwe, ADDA Emergency Response Unit Lead, emphasized the importance of collaboration in protecting young lives.

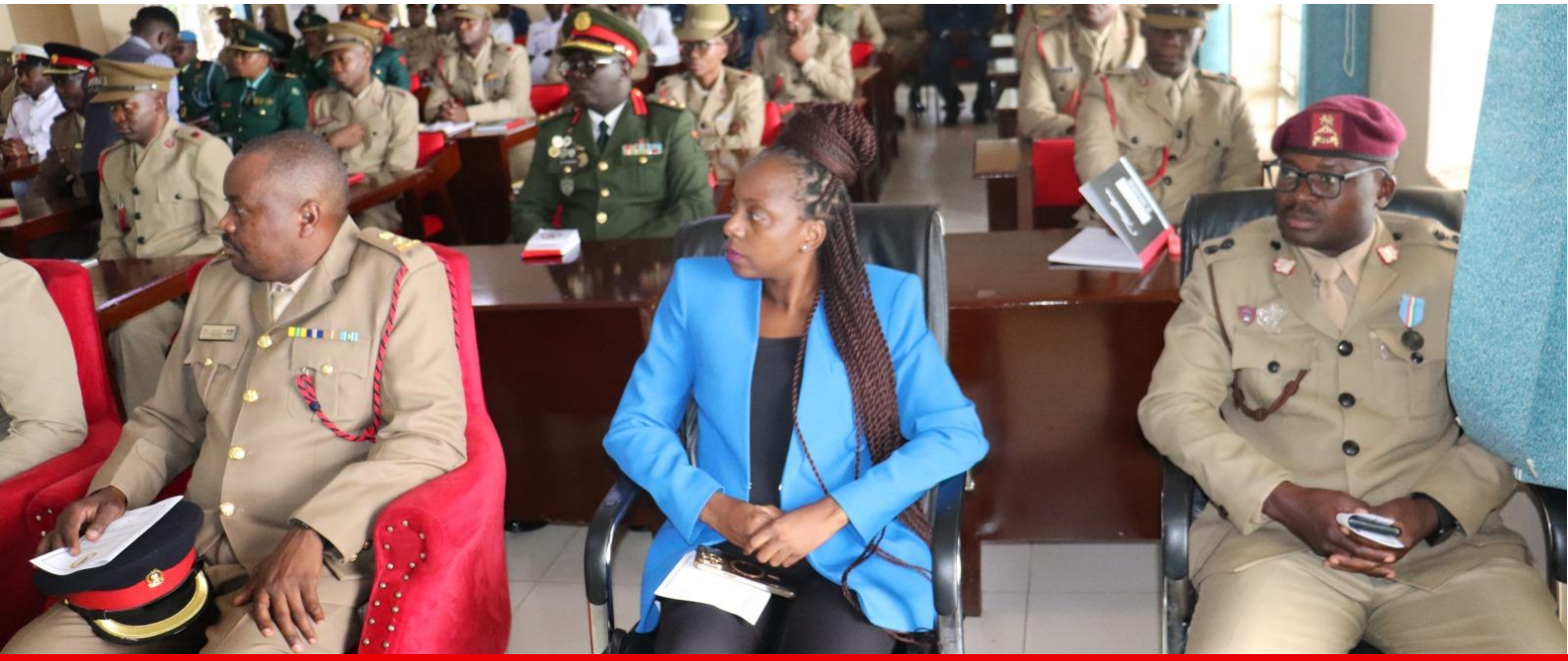
"If learners understand early warning signs and know what actions to take, we can reduce panic, injuries, and loss of life. That is why we are listening to our partners as we design this initiative," said Gondwe.

Vincent Katonda, Co-Lead for the Emergency Response Unit, said the program is focused on reaching schools in disaster-prone areas with life-saving knowledge and practical skills and Phalombe was chosen as the starting point because it was one of the most vulnerable districts.

The Education officials welcomed the initiative, describing it as timely and relevant.

Shanever Chamba, Education in Emergencies Coordinator in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, said the engagement has opened important discussions that will strengthen disaster risk management in schools.

"This collaboration will help us improve how disaster preparedness is integrated in the education system," said Chamba, while pledging government support.



MUST, MDF IN STRATEGIC LEADERS' TRAINING

By Eddie Kamcholoti

The Malawi Defence Force Command and Staff College, in partnership with MUST, recently welcomed Cohort 5 to the Senior Command and Staff Course.

The development marked another milestone in the continued development of strategic

leadership within MDF and other regional defence forces.

The training programme integrates a professional military course with the Postgraduate Diploma in Strategic Studies (PDSS), which is delivered at the MDF college in Salima in collaboration with MUST under the Bingu School of Culture and Heritage.

Since its inception, the partnership between MUST and MDF has now clocked five years, proof of being both strong and effective, with the successful integration of academic theories with practical military training.

The course is designed to produce senior officers who are practically competent, innovative, and capable of critical and reflective thinking.

Participants are encouraged to analyse strategic issues beyond the military sphere, linking them to broader concerns in international relations, defence, peace, and security.

This approach equips officers with the skills and perspectives needed to operate confidently in complex and evolving strategic environments.

Following the official welcome of the new cohort, MUST faculty conducted orientation sessions to familiarise the new students with the university, its policies, and the structure of the PDSS programme.

These sessions provided the trainees with a clear understanding of academic expectations and support systems available throughout the course.

In preparation for the delivery of the academic component, MUST held a Teaching Effectiveness Workshop on January 13 and 14 for lecturers assigned to the PDSS programme.

In line with its strategic pillar of Education Excellence, the workshop focused on strengthening teaching practice to ensure quality learning outcomes for Cohort 5.

Key areas covered included effective teaching methods, instructional materials, assessment and measurement, inclusive education, quality assurance, and professional conduct.

As Cohort 5 embarked on this demanding programme, the continued collaboration between MUST and MDF remains central to shaping well-rounded senior officer leaders equipped with strategic insight, academic grounding, and practical skills required to meet contemporary and future security challenges.

MUST STUDENT COMES TOP IN CLEAN ENERGY AT GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY FORUM

By Jacqueline Makhenjera

A second-year Manufacturing Engineering student at MUST, Innocent Mandili, has represented Africa at the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week, where he was awarded as Champion in Clean Energy Technologies for his innovation, Thermo EL Stove.

Selected among 32 finalists from across Africa, Innocent showcased how African-led solutions can address global challenges.

Inspired by his upbringing in Phalombe District, Malawi, where his family relied on firewood and charcoal, the multi-award-winning Innocent has always desired to change this narrative through technology and innovation.

"This innovation was born from my own lived experience. I wanted to create a solution that responds to African realities while contributing to global sustainability," said Mandili.

Using carbon-neutral briquettes, the innovation delivers clean, affordable, and sustainable cooking solutions, proving that solutions developed from African realities can change the world.

MUST is proud of Innocent for this outstanding achievement, which reflects the university's commitment to innovation, problem-solving, and producing graduates who respond to real-world challenges.

MUST COMMITS TO SAFE, RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE THROUGH PSEA TRAINING

By Mary Mwambongo

MUST on January 6, 2026 began a three-day training for the African Drone and Data Academy-ADDA staff on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA).

ADDA is a UNICEF-funded project hosted at MUST under the Ndata School of Climate and Earth Sciences.

The training aimed to equip the staff with a clear understanding of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), its forms and practical ways to prevent it.

It also sought to empower staff to protect themselves and others, and ensure that no one becomes a victim or perpetrator of SEA.

Speaking during opening session, Emmanuel Chinkaka, ADDA Project Manager highlighted the importance of the training.

He encouraged participants to actively engage in the sessions and make full use of the opportunity to learn and reflect on their roles in promoting a safe and respectful working environment.

Robert Banda, a participant and ADDA Ground Operator, applauded management for initiating the training.

He said the sessions are important in changing mindsets and improving the understanding of SEA among staff members.

"By the end of the training, I expect to gain a deeper understanding of SEA and learn effective ways of addressing issues related to it, both in the workplace and beyond," said Banda.

Both UNICEF and MUST have zero-tolerance policies on SEA, and the training reflects ADDA's commitment to upholding these values.

STUDENTS LEAD PRIVATE FOREST REVOLUTION IN MZIMBA

By Fanuel Msiska

Students from MUST continue to play a leading role in addressing Malawi's timber and environmental challenges through a tree planting initiative in Mzimba District.

The initiative was a response to the increasing demand for charcoal and construction materials, which has contributed to accelerated deforestation across the Malawi.

Led by Falcon Forestry and Woodworks, a student-led initiative comprising students from MUST and Kasungu Teachers Training College (TTC), the exercise saw over 2,000 pine seedlings planted on a previously bare land in Group Village Headman (GVH) Nyangu.

Speaking after the exercise, Clement Kafwafwa, CEO for Falcon Forestry and Woodworks and president of MUST Students Representative Council, said they aim to reduce reliance on imported timber, promote private forest development, create employment opportunities, and transform idle land into productive economic assets.

Kafwafwa described the project as a "private forest revolution" that supports the Malawi 2063 vision by ensuring that population growth is matched with increased forest assets.

GVH Nyangu commended the students for demonstrating that tree planting can provide both environmental protection and economic benefits to communities.

The initiative highlights MUST's commitment to innovation and community engagement, showcasing how students are applying knowledge and leadership to deliver practical solutions to national development challenges.

MUST TRAINS HEALTH MINISTRY BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERS, TECHNICIANS

By Eddie Kamcholoti

The Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST), in partnership with Ministry of Health, recently held a two-week training program for biomedical engineers and technicians drawn from district hospitals across the country.

The Global Fund supported initiative was held from December 20 to 31, 2025 at MUST campus in Thyolo.

It aimed to bridge the gap between engineering and clinical medicine by ensuring that medical technologies are safely designed, correctly installed, and maintained in accordance with high professional standards.

The training focused on risk mitigation, advanced troubleshooting, and preventive maintenance, with particular emphasis on oxygen gas plants, incinerators, and medical imaging equipment, critical infrastructure for effective healthcare delivery.

Speaking during the closing ceremony, which was attended by officials from government, MUST staff, and other dignitaries, Guest of Honour and Deputy Director of Curative and Medical Rehabilitation Services at the ministry, Dr Nitta Nayeja, commended the participants for their diligence, commitment, and successful completion of the program.

Dr Nayeja emphasized the importance of the skills acquired in ensuring optimal functioning of sophisticated medical equipment in public hospitals, noting the immediate and long-term impact of the training on patient care and public health.

She expressed gratitude to the sponsors and MUST for providing financial and technical support, respectively, saying the program's success was a result of their generosity and sustained commitment.

"Healthcare is a shared and cross-cutting responsibility, and this collaboration serves as a model for future partnerships," Dr Nayeja said.

Representing the MUST Vice Chancellor, Dr Duncane Batizani, Assistant Registrar (Academics) hailed the participants for their perseverance despite the demanding nature of the training, which often required extended working hours.

"I urge you to go out and be agents of change, bridge the gap, embrace innovation, and uphold ethics and compassion. Biomedical Engineering is a calling that sits at the critical intersection of medicine and engineering technology," he said.

One of the participants, Peter Kanyika, described the training as a success and thanked MUST, the ministry, sponsors, and fellow participants for their support and collaboration.

"As we return to our respective workplaces, we do so with renewed energy, enthusiasm, and a shared commitment to applying this knowledge to strengthen healthcare delivery and technological advancement," Kanyika said.

AIRTEL CONNECTS MUST TO NZERU FUND SCHOLARSHIPS

By James Mphande

Airtel Malawi plc on January 7, 2026 announced a Nzeru Fund merit-based scholarship that will see 25 students enrolled in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) related programmes at MUST benefiting.

Speaking during launch of the scholarship in Lilongwe, Airtel Malawi Managing Director Aashish Dutt said much as education is at the heart of development, in Malawi many students fail to make tangible contributions to national development as they end up dropping out due to financial challenges.

"The scholarship is there to bridge this gap so that such students are not deprived of their potential future. Nzeru Fund scholarships will cover students' tuition, accommodation, monthly stipend and data connectivity. It goes mere support towards students' fees as it seeks to enhance their purpose and responsibility," he said.

MUST Vice Chancellor, Professor Address Malata, who described the news as the first gift to the university in the New Year, thanked Airtel Malawi for the scholarships.

"Education is indeed a catalyst for development and supporting students financially enables them to realise personal dreams but also

contribute to family, community and national development. Innovation and technology, the focus areas of the scholarship, are current drivers of economic development and they are also a focus area for MUST programming," said Professor Malata.

She urged students who will benefit from the scholarship to payback to Airtel Malawi through helping others and working hard and being exemplary through good behaviour and conduct.

To access the scholarship, those selected into MUST STEM-related programmes in the upcoming selection, will have to apply for consideration. The university will soon communicate on the application process.

Apart from this scholarship, needy but brilliant students applying for public university selection this year are encouraged to choose MUST as it also has other scholarships from individual industry partners and others under the Endowment Fund.

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