



**MALAWI BUREAU OF STANDARDS**

*Promoting Standardization and Quality Assurance in Malawi*

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO IMPORTERS AND EXPORTERS ON WTO-TBT NATIONAL ENQUIRY POINT FOR MALAWI**

**The World Trade Organization (WTO)** is the umbrella organization responsible for overseeing the implementation of all international trade related agreements among countries. Under the WTO agreements on Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), the WTO recommends the establishment of National Enquiry Points (NEPs) so that WTO member countries and stakeholders could easily obtain information about SPS and TBT related measures, technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures (as the case may be), without having to identify and directly contact the agency responsible for any given function in another country. The Government of Malawi, therefore, officially designated the Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS) as the National Enquiry Point (NEP) for Malawi for SPS (responsible for food safety) and also as NEP for TBT.

The MBS, therefore, would like to remind the general public that the MBS is an officially designated NEP for handling areas covered in the WTO agreements, on SPS measures (food safety aspects), and TBT. The NEP is housed in the Standards Information Centre of the MBS.

One of the main problems enterprises from developing countries face in promoting exports is the lack of information on standards, technical regulations and sanitary and Phytosanitary measures applicable to their product(s) in target markets.

*The NEP among other functions is, therefore responsible for the following:*

- **Handling enquiries:** NEP responds to enquiries on standards, technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures in Malawi and other members of the WTO. The enquiries may emanate from the local industry or from foreign interested parties based in other WTO member states.
- **Dissemination of foreign notifications to the industry:** The NEP staff receives and reviews notifications from the WTO. The notifications are then carefully screened and channelled to the affected exporters and replies to the affected exporters/importers and other stakeholders (such as industry, various standards development committees, the academia, consumer organizations, research institutions, among others)- for information, review and comments.
- **Provision of information:** The NEP serves as a referral service focal point in Malawi for trade information and about standards, standards related information, technical regulations/rules, and conformity assessment procedures. Conformity assessment procedures activities include inspection, market surveillance, testing,

certification and accreditation and are mainly implemented by governmental regulatory authorities.

The NEP, therefore provides answers from relevant national bodies, importers, exporters and replies to the country making the enquiry as well as for the provision of relevant documents. The NEP also provides, upon request, information on participation in bilateral and multilateral equivalence agreements and arrangements.

The business sector is hence encouraged to make use of the NEP to obtain information regarding standards, technical regulations, food safety measures and conformity assessment procedures of their products in the importing countries.

The general public is further informed that the responsibilities of the MBS as a NEP under SPS Agreement is specific to food safety matters only, while matters related to plant and animals health and related issues are the responsibilities of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security.

*Enquiries to the MBS as NEP for SPS (Food safety) and TBT can be made using the contacts below:*

**Director General**  
**Malawi Bureau of Standards**  
**P. O. Box 946**  
**BLANTYRE**

Tel: **+265 1 870 488**

Fax: **+265 1 870 456**

E-mail: [info@mbsmw.org](mailto:info@mbsmw.org)

Or [mbs@mbsmw.org](mailto:mbs@mbsmw.org)

Website: [www.mbsmw.org](http://www.mbsmw.org)