

## MALAWI BUREAU OF STANDARDS HAS DONE IT AGAIN!!!

The Malawi Bureau of Standards Quality Assurance Services Department (MBS QA Services) has been accredited by SADCAS under the Main Scope: Management Systems (ISO/IEC 17021-1), Sub-scope: Quality Management Systems (ISO/IEC 17021-3) ISO 9001 in the sectors food products and beverages, tobacco, rubber and plastics. The MBS QA Services Department is in fact the 3<sup>rd</sup> certification body in the 14 SADC Member States serviced by SADCAS to be accredited by SADCAS. The certificate which was issued on 12 August 2019 is valid for 5 years until 11 August 2024.

The certificate was handed over during a ceremony held on 7 February 2019 at the Sunbird Mount Soche Hotel in Blantyre, Malawi. The ceremony started off with a prayer by Mr Masautso Ngamwane, the National Accreditation Focal Point (NAFP) – Malawi which is housed within the MBS with the other NAFP- Malawi being housed at the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism. The Director General of Malawi Bureau of Standards, Mr Mr Symon Mandala delivered the welcome remarks during which he articulated the importance of accreditation in national development plans and further shared the plans to extend the scopes of accreditation to other areas of operation all in an effort to provide internationally recognized competitive conformity assessment services in Malawi.



From Left to right: Dr Kufambata, Chairman MBS Board of Directors; Mr Mandala, MBS Director General ; Mrs Mutasa, SADCAS CEO; Honourable Salim Bagus, Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism; and Dr Ndala, Principle Secretary Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism

In her speech Mrs Maureen P Mutasa, informed the guests about the process that MBS QA Service went through from submission of application on 28 February 2018 to completeness check, document review and initial assessment culminating in accreditation on 12 August 2019. It took Malawi Bureau of Standards a good 18 months from application to accreditation. Given the complexity of today's supply chains, reassurance in the conformity assessments that are performed in another jurisdiction or market sector is essential. "Without a level of confidence, the free exchange of goods and services risks being hampered by technical barriers or varying levels

of quality, thereby increasing costs for importers, exporters with the end user, the consumers whom we all are suffering the most from the blow” she said. She noted that in many economies now accreditation is being embraced by governments as a mandatory activity in many regulated areas because of the benefits accreditation brings to help governments meet their responsibilities and safeguard the public and protect the environment as well as in promoting trade. “Accreditation of MBS QA services could not have come at a more opportune time following the signing of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) by 52 countries and ratification by 24 countries. “Technically the AfCFTA is now in force unlocking a market of 1.3 billion people across African Borders” she remarked. Accreditation is poised to play an even greater role as a transparent and nondiscriminatory means of assuring technical competence of conformity assessment service providers.

The SADCAS CEO then informed of the world's exclusive global database for accredited management system certifications officially launched recently by International Accreditation Forum (IAF) of which SADCAS is now signatory to its Multi-Lateral Arrangement (IAF MLA). The database provides businesses and governments the ability to digitally validate an organization’s certification(s) to determine if a certificate is valid and if the certification body issuing the certificate is accredited to issue certifications to that standard. IAF CertSearch <https://www.iafcertsearch.org>, the largest global database for accredited certifications, currently includes around 400,000 valid certifications across more than 150 economies covering a range of sectors. With over 4000 certification bodies and 68 IAF MLA signatory accreditation bodies globally, validation of certifications across supply chains can be difficult. The aggregation of certification data in one global database – IAF CertSearch - makes the validation process simple and efficient. IAF CertSearch, a tool that supports procurement has now been dubbed the game changer for accredited certification, improving the awareness, integrity and value of accredited certification. Organizations will no longer be able to claim to have an accredited certification when they do not. By virtue of being accredited by SADCAS which is signatory to the IAF MLA, MBS QA Services QMS certifications will be showcased worldwide. She urged MBS QA Services to maintain their hard earned accreditation and then ended her speech by congratulating MBS on this noble achievement and welcomed MBS QA Services to the exclusive club of internationally recognized certification bodies.

In his remarks and before inviting the guest of honour to the podium, Dr Dalisto Kafumbata, the Chairman of the MBS Board of Directors outlined the journey towards accreditation, the reasons why MBS embarked on the journey and highlighted the challenges faced along the way. He then thanked all the cooperating partners EU, UNIDO, NORAD and UNDP for the funding provided to upgrade the quality infrastructure of Malawi. He also thanked the Government of Malawi who are funding the new MBS buildings and then concluded his remarks with a commitment to maintain the hard-earned accreditation which he referred to as the Springboard for more successes”.

In his speech the guest of honour Honourable Salim Ibrahim Bagus, Member of Parliament and Minister of Trade, Industry and Tourism, congratulated the MBS for this achievement another cap for MBS which was recently crowned the best performing parastatal in Malawi. “With MBS QA Services now internationally recognized there is no reason why local Companies should use external certification services saving the country much needed foreign currency,” he said. The Honourable Minister prided in having MBS QA Services being accredited by our own multi economy accreditation body SADCAS. He shared the President’s vision as articulated under Development Strategy #3 of transforming Malawi’s economy from a net importer to an exporter of value - added goods and the measures put in place to achieve this vision such as developing Malawi’s conformity assessment infrastructure. The Guest of Honour also informed of Government efforts to implement ISO 9001 in all Government departments a project which is already underway. He then shared with guests the ambitious project which is now at 92% completion of the new building for the MBS. In his closing remarks, the guest of honour thanked all the cooperating partners EU, UNIDO, UNDP, NORAD for their financial and technical assistance in upgrading the quality infrastructure of Malawi and reiterated the Government commitment to quality as documented in the Malawi Quality policy.

After the guest of honour key note address, Mrs Mutasa then handed over the accreditation certificate to Mr Mandala who handed over the certificate through Dr D Kafumbata the MBS Board Chairman to the Honourable Minister who was accompanied to the ceremony by Dr Ken Ndala, the Principle Secretary in the Ministry of Industry Trade and Tourism.



Guests at the MBS QA Services certificate handover ceremony pose for a group photo after the ceremony at Mount Soche Sunbird Hotel in Blantyre

A vote of thanks was given by Mrs Stipheria Kanyenda the Director of Ceremonies following which a closing prayer was given by Mr Steven Kuyeri MBS Director of Testing Services. Guests were then invited to a cocktail party. The handover ceremony was attended by about over 55 MBS management and staff, Government officials, captains of industry, invited guests and the media. Media interviews were held with the guest of honour, the Principle Secretary and the SADCAS CEO.

~~~~~