

1<sup>th</sup> October 2013

From: Federation of Disability Organisations in Malawi

To: The Chief Executive Officer

Blantyre City Assembly,

Private bag 67

Blantyre.

Dear Sir,

**RE: PETITION ON ACCESSIBILITY OF ALL FACILITIES AND SERVICES AVAILABLE OR PROVIDED TO THE PUBLIC**

The Federation of Disability Organizations in Malawi (FEDOMA) is hereby submitting this petition on **accessibility of all facilities and services available or provided to the public**. Our petition makes references to **Article 4 Section 8 Of The Disability Act** which states that, “Government shall take appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities have, on equal basis, access to the physical environment, transportation, information and communications, including information and communication technologies and systems, and other facilities and services available or provided to the public by developing, promulgating and monitoring the implementation of universal standards and guidelines for the accessibility of all facilities and services available or provided to the public”.

The circumstances surrounding our petition are that we are concerned with following:

- 1) **New buildings:** The concept of ‘universal design’ and ‘equality in access to physical environment’ is not being adhered to. Plans are approved without taking into consideration the needs of persons with disabilities. This creates obstacles that impede persons with disabilities’ full enjoyment of their right to access.

- 2) **Existing “old” buildings:** There is no effort by your authority to enforce amendments to buildings in the city of Blantyre just like an city in Malawi where other authorities have not made any improvements.

**Sample Case 1:** Blantyre City Assembly, just as any city rate payer persons with disabilities are denied access to your offices due to the inaccessibility of these offices. Those that have made efforts to maneuver around these barriers end up causing further injuries to themselves.

**Sample Case 2:** the courts, the police, the shopping malls, and some banks which are public, have been constructed in such a way that they are not accessible to persons with disabilities which contravenes with the law. As a result of this situation, persons with disabilities cannot exercise their human rights as indicated in Chapter Four of the Constitution of Malawi.

#### **Solution:**

- 1) As the overall authority, our petition is for the Blantyre City Assembly office to take measure in addressing the issues of inaccessibility of all public buildings and services taking into account the needs of persons with disabilities.
- 2) The City Assembly incorporating the universal design concept which seeks to create products, environments, programmes and services that are inherently accessible to all people, both with and without disabilities.
- 3) Within the by-laws of the City that it becomes mandatory and a requirement that new plans meet disability friendly standard of access.

We do look forward to your response on interventions that the city will make. FEDOMA and its affiliates therefore expect you to respond within 30 days of this petition informing us of the interventions the City Assembly will take.

Thank you for your kind attention to this matter.

**MUSSA CHIWAULA  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**