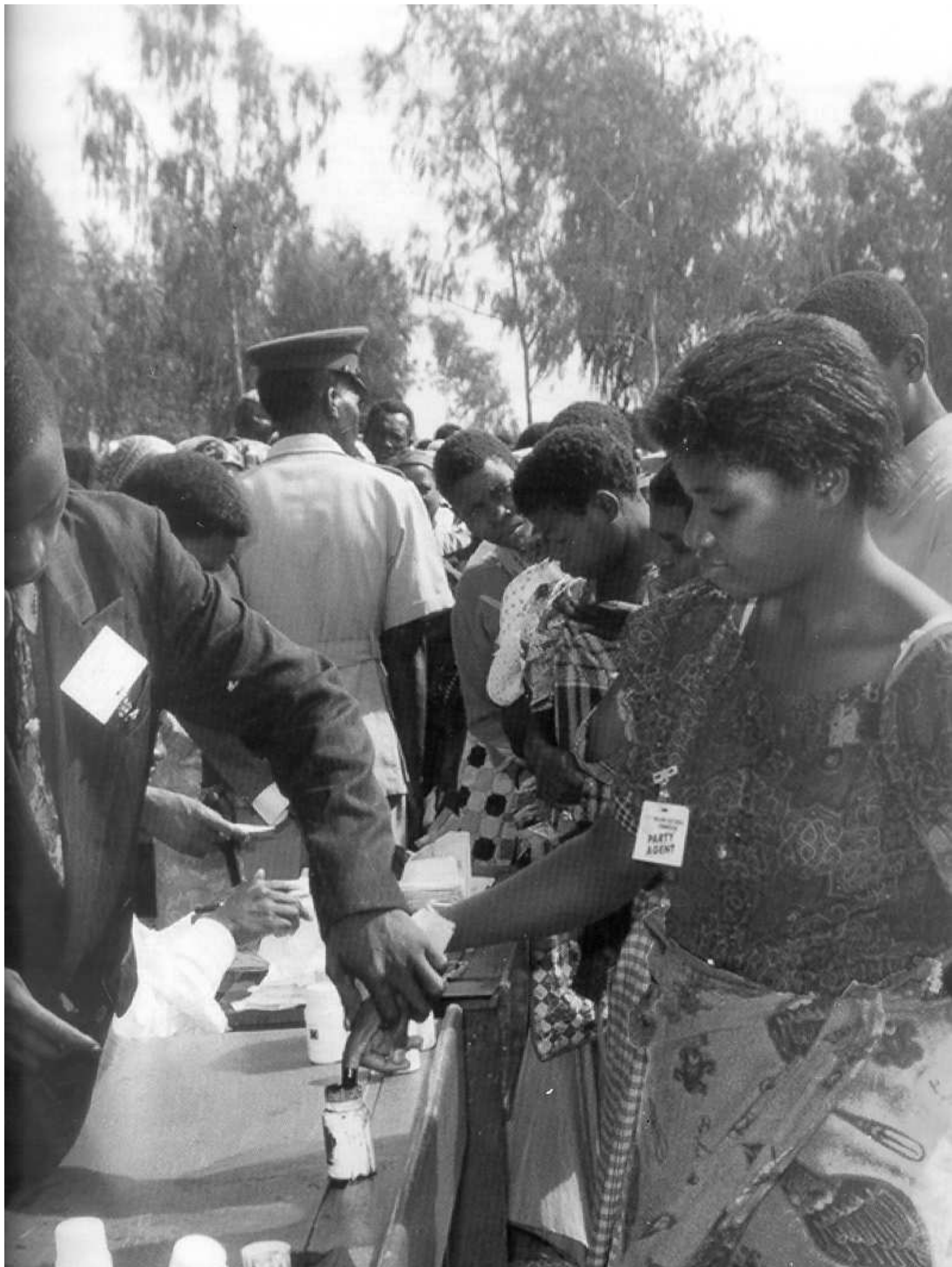




**CONSOLIDATING
FREEDOM AND
DEMOCRACY**



12. Consolidating Freedom and Democracy

OUR AIM

The UDF government recognizes the role of civil society in ensuring good governance. Therefore UDF will increase the participation of civic leaders in decision making. Additionally, the UDF will give support to NGOs in their development work.

Since the turn to multiparty democracy the UDF government has worked very hard to ensure that the media exercises their freedom unfettered. The UDF has kept its clean record of not taking in political prisoners or closing down media organizations. The next UDF government will continue to improve this relationship with the media.

The next UDF government will consolidate the hard-earned freedom and democracy flourishing in Malawi. It will foster development-oriented governance, predicated on a strong sense of national cohesion and unity.

WHAT WE PLEDGED

The UDF being the first government in a multiparty democracy promised to make Malawi a nation of genuine democracy and ensure that dictatorial rule never returns. UDF pledged to build free and open society, promote human rights and increase transparency and accountability. It promised to safeguard freedom of speech and association and ensure that peace and stability prevails.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- Parliament has been strengthened through broader representation and a transparent election system. The three parties represented in Parliament are working together to achieve shared national goals and aspirations.
- Decentralization and creation of District Assemblies with elected councillors has been accomplished. This will foster participatory decision making - a prerequisite for good governance.
- Civil society is now sufficiently sensitized to play its rightful role in the decision making process. Religious groups have more leverage in the decision making process than ever before.
- Freedom of the press was introduced by the UDF government and is being carefully safeguarded.
- Measures of transparency and accountability in government have been instigated. The UDF government is building the capacity of its civil service to be accountable to the electorate.
- The establishment of the Human Rights Commission, the Anti-Corruption Bureau, and the Office of the Ombudsman has helped to guarantee freedoms and rights of ordinary citizens.
- Coordination exists between government the private sector, and international development partners. The UDF government has created an enabling environment for exchange of ideas and information between stakeholders through national and international workshops, debates, and policy dialogue.

THE CHALLENGES

- The UDF is confronted with issues of biased public perception that the development process is politicised. Contrary to this belief, the UDF government has maintained a steady balance in the way it has distributed public goods. The UDF has demonstrated that it is committed to national unity, peace and stability.
- Additionally, some people have attempted to create a distorted impression that the UDF is violating press freedoms and engaging in political violence.

OUR COMMITMENTS

The UDF government thrives on principals of peace, unity, democracy and development. Under this manifesto, the government is determined to see democracy flourish in the country by protecting and preserving the rights of Malawians to a free press, freedom of worship, freedom of association and participation. The UDF government recognizes that the role of civil society in ensuring good governance is paramount. Therefore under this manifesto, the participation of civic leaders in national decision making will continue to increase. The UDF government is committed to working with NGOs and religious organizations in consolidating democracy.

The UDF government believes that real peace and stability in the country will be achieved if there is national unity and political tolerance and a sense of ownership and responsibility among Malawians.

Under this manifesto, the UDF remains vigilant to curb corruption and enhance transparency and accountability.

OUR PLEDGES

The next UDF government will:

- Continue to consolidate democracy through the strengthening of parliament and District Assemblies and other instruments of participatory decision-making.
- Intensify civic education with respect to human rights and the promotion of rule of law.
- Strengthen institutional arrangements and powers of the Human Rights Commission the Inter- Ministerial Committee on Human Rights and Democracy, the Anti Corruption Bureau, the Office of Ombudsman.
- Create an enabling environment for civil society to participate in all development activities including policy formulation and the administration of elections.



*A Woman Voting during
General Elections*