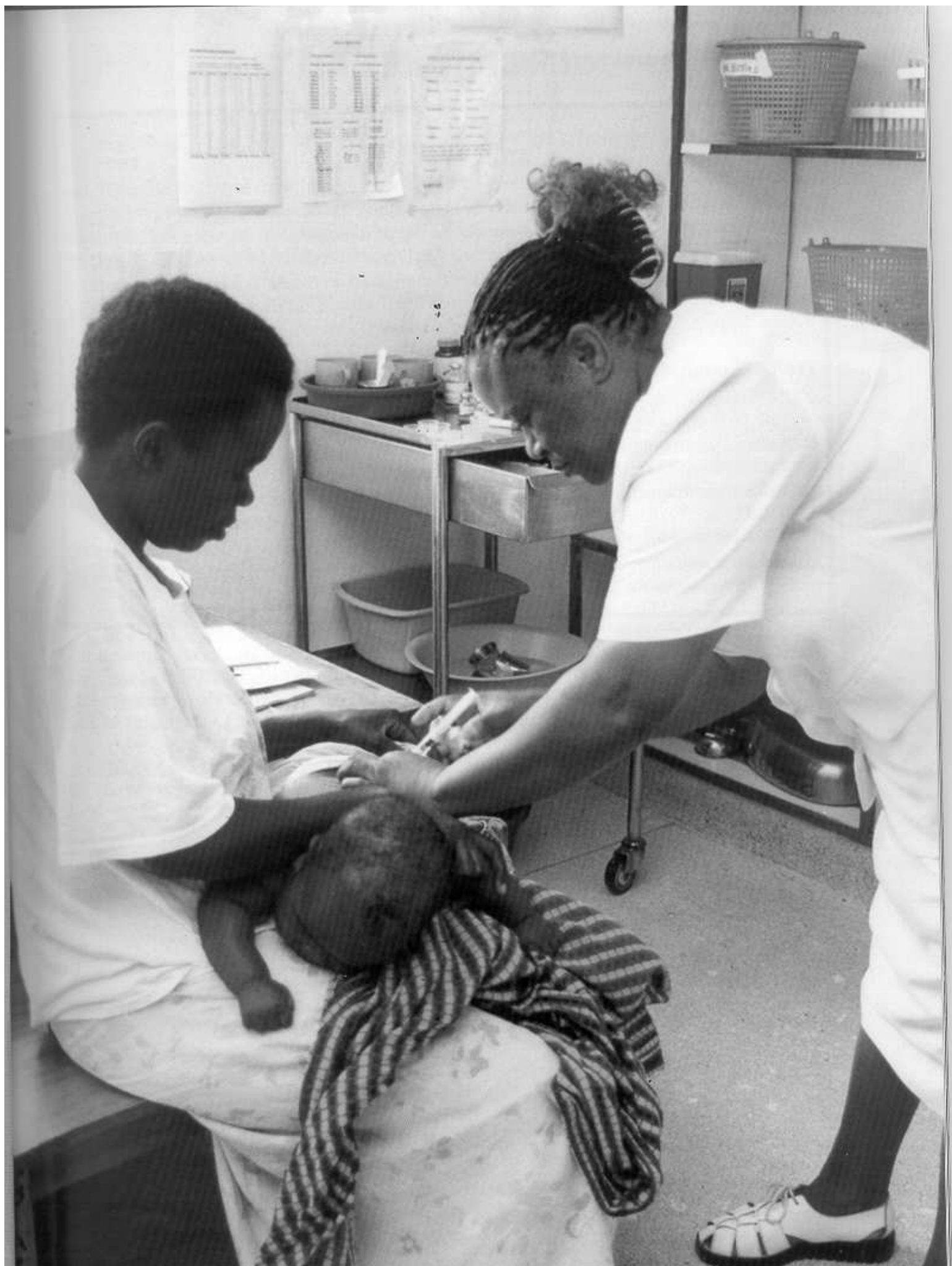




**DELIVERING
UNIVERSAL
HEALTH CARE**



3. Delivering Universal Health Care

OUR AIM

Good health is essential for a nation's economic productivity and survival. The UDF has established that most Malawians do not have access to basic health facilities. In rural communities, people travel long distances to reach a hospital or clinic, which are often understaffed and not well equipped. Medicines and hospital beds are in short supply. The UDF government will extensively increase its allocation to health in the 2004-2005 budget. Funds are being mobilized to build new district hospitals in Phalombe, Dowa, N'eno, Blantyre, and Balaka. Many dispensaries and maternity centers will be upgraded to full health centers.

The UDF wants to guarantee an adequate supply of drugs and medical supplies in every hospital, dispensary, and clinic in Malawi. Measures have been put in place to curtail the stealing of drugs. The shortage of medical personnel is being dealt with in many ways. For example, 1,000 auxiliary nurses will be trained per year and these will be placed in district and central hospitals. The number of nurses and medical doctors graduating from the University of Malawi will be dramatically increased to meet the shortfalls.

The UDF government is paying particular attention to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The UDF will expand the distribution of free retro-viral drugs and encourage voluntary testing in order to prolong and preserve the lives of infected Malawians.

WHAT WE PLEDGED

During the past ten years the UDF government strived to provide quality health services to all Malawians and intensify the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The UDF vowed to invest more in the health sector to increase life expectancy while fostering economic productivity.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Within a period of 9 years, the UDF government has accomplished the following:

Physical Infrastructure:

- Constructed Mzuzu Central Hospital, Thyolo, Chiradzulu and Chitipa District Hospitals, and initiated the construction of a new Nkhosakota District Hospital. Zomba General hospital is being rebuilt. Malembo and Chadza Health centres have been constructed. Phalombe, Nkhosakota and Balaka District
- Constructed a new Community Hospital in Monkey Bay and upgraded Mitundu and Kabudula Rural Hospitals to the status of Full Community Hospitals.
- Rehabilitated and extended 30 existing health centers throughout the nation.
- Constructed 10 new Health Centres; 75 New Maternity Units and 334 Posts under the Bakili Muluzi Health Initiative.
- Constructed 462 new staff houses throughout Malawi.
- Achieved a 14% increase in the number of health centers with radio communication.
- Attained a 20% increase in installation and/or repair of health center boreholes in all districts, nationwide.
- Gained a 30% increase in installation

systems in all health centers nationwide.

- Constructed and equipped three major Regional Maintenance Units, and developed a national physical assets management policy.
- Constructed a new High Dependency Unit at Lilongwe Central Hospital.

Human Resources:

- Developed a National Human Resources Development Plan.
- Developed and funded a six-year Emergency Training Institution.
- Accomplished the first ever dual annual in-takes in all schools. In effect, this means the production of approximately 550 nurses per year as distinct from the normal 230, including those in upgrading courses.
- Doubled the in-take of Laboratory, Radiology and Primary technicians

from 10 to 20 per year, and clinical officers from 60 to 120, (including those in upgrading courses).

- Tripled annual in-take into the College of Medicine from the normal 20 to 60 medical students.
- Re-introduced the Medical Assistant Training Programme with dual annual in-takes and 138 annual graduates.
- Opened a school of Anesthesia in Lilongwe Central Hospital campus for Clinical Anaesthetist Officers.
- Implemented the Functional Review for the Ministry of Health & Population, which included 2,050 promotions.
- Introduced the first Bachelor's Degree Programme in Health Sciences. In the three years since the programme began, over 72 persons have graduated.
- Established a Health Services Commission for the Sector.



A Modern Operation Theatre

- Trained 1,100 nurses in emergency obstetric care.
- Trained 4,482 Health Surveillance assistants, 408 of whom were trained for the Bakili Muluzi Health Initiative.

Supplies, Equipment and Drugs:

- For the first time in the nation's history, achieved the World Health Organisation goal of US\$1.25 per capita per annum for drugs.
- Purchased MK400 million of basic medical supplies and equipment for all district hospitals and health centers.
- Purchased 102 ambulances at an estimated cost of MK 367 million for all districts in the nation.
- Purchased 12 specialized ambulances for emergency obstetrical care.
- Established a renal dialysis unit at Lilongwe Central Hospital.

Policy:

- Developed a National Policy document "To the Year 2020: a Vision of the Health Sector in Malawi".
- Developed the following plans for the health sector: National Health Services Plan, the National Human Resources Development Plan, the National Health Facilities Development Plan, the National Physical Assets Management Policy, and the National Transport Policy.
- Finalized the Essential Health Package Costing, conducted the first National Health Accounts, and introduced the Sector Wide Approach.

- Completed the first National Micro-Nutrient Survey and developed a 5 year comprehensive National Nutrition Strategy.
- Secured direct donor budgetary support to District Health Offices for the improvement of health service delivery.
- Institutionalized the development of District Health Plans and District Implementation Plans as an essential step in the decentralization process.

HIV/AIDS

- Established the National AIDS Commission and a Cabinet position within the Office of the President and Cabinet.
- Introduced free distribution of Niverapine for the prevention of "Mother-to-Child-Transmission (PMTCT)" of the HIV virus.
- Made Anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs) available to patients.
- Established a National Blood Transfusion Service.
- Established a National Government and Faith Communities Taskforce on HIV/AIDS.
- Opened a special "Lighthouse" clinic for the integrated care and management of the HIV/AIDS patients.
- Expanded voluntary counselling and testing sites throughout the nation, to 74 functioning units.
- Established the Diflucan Partnership Programme between the Ministry of Health and Population and Pfizer Pharmaceuticals. Diflucan is the drug used for the prevention and treatment of the two most common opportunistic infections in AIDS



patients.

- Mobilized US\$196 million from the Global Fund and US\$30 million from the World Bank for HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment.

Programs:

- Eliminated neonatal tetanus, measles and polio in Malawi.
- Received the WHO award for the best Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) in Africa.
- Established a National Health Management Information System.
- Successfully introduced insecticide treated nets (ITNs) for the control of malaria. Since the programme was introduced two years ago, over 1 million nets have been distributed.
- Expanded the number of Baby-Friendly Hospitals from 1 to 11 and increased exclusive breast-feeding for infants under 4-months from 6% to 10%.
- Enacted a National Code for the marketing of Infant and Young Child Foods.
- Establishment over 400 drug revolving funds throughout the nation.
- Mobilized US\$40 million from the Global Fund for Malaria control.

THE CHALLENGES

The over-riding challenge of the UDF government for the coming years will be the successful implementation of the Essential Health Package, which is pro-poor and addresses the issue of equity and access on the most defensible basis. This package includes:

- Vaccine Preventable Diseases (EPI).

- Acute Respiratory Infections.
- Acute Diarrhoea Diseases.
- Adverse maternal and Neonatal outcomes.
- Tuberculosis.
- Malaria.
- Sexually Transmitted Infections, including HIV/AIDS.
- Nutritional Deficiencies.
- Bilharzia.
- Eye, ear and skin problems.
- Common injuries.

The UDF government is ready to meet the following challenges:

- Ensuring the production and retention of adequate numbers of the many and varied professional cadres.
- Ensuring an un-interrupted supply of essential medical drugs and basic medical supplies and equipment.
- Ensuring that all national health facilities have functioning water, power, and communications systems.
- Ensuring that the delivery of all services: EHP and non-EHP are rationalized at the appropriate primary, secondary and tertiary levels respectively, and that a functional two-way referral system is in full operation.
- Ensuring that the Joint Programme of Work is successfully implemented with the accompanying financial and other resources both from Government and Co-operating partners.

OUR COMMITMENT

Under this manifesto the UDF government is fully committed to reducing the national burden of morbidity and mortality, particularly among the most vulnerable groups, through the implementation of the

Essential Health package, and the other national plans and programmes. This package will be delivered free-of-charge at the point of delivery for all who cannot afford to pay.

The UDF will also ensure that the Abuja Declaration, which commits all African governments to assign 13% of their National Discretionary Budgets to the Health Sector, is met by Malawi.

The UDF will encourage expanded public private sector involvement in providing health care so as to deliberately shift resources to facilities located in rural areas or those that serve the disadvantaged.

The next UDF government commits itself to the further improvement of the health of all Malawians by increasing access to a wider range of quality health services.

OUR PLEDGES

The next UDF government will do the following:

- Make antiretroviral drugs (HIV drugs) widely available.
- Develop infrastructure for the dispersal of HIV drugs.
- Continue to fully support and fund the six-year Emergency Plan for the necessary human resources production.
- Support the newly established Health Services Commission to retain its essential professional cadres.
- Introduce a new cadre of "Auxiliary Nurse" and the training of 1,000 per year for 2 years. These will be placed in all Central and District Hospitals.
- Improve the welfare of medical staff

to avoid "Brain Drain".

- Ensure that adequate budgetary provisions are made on an annual basis for the purchase of essential drugs and those basic medical supplies and equipment required for all the nation's health facilities.
- Establish three new Faculties of Pharmacy, Dentistry and Physiotherapy at the College of Medicine.
- Ensure that all equipment and facilities are adequately maintained.
- Strengthen the current physical infrastructure stock with water, electricity and communication systems.
- Upgrade dispensaries and maternities to the level of full health centers.
- Construct strategically located health centers, that will greatly improve access to the majority of the people.
- Construct a new district hospital in Blantyre and mobilize funds for new district hospitals in Phalombe, Dowa, Neno and Balaka.
- Establish a Renal Dialysis Unit at Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital; and an Orthopedic Centre at Lilongwe Central Hospital.
- Ensure equitable access to all available HIV/AIDS services and medications.
- Maintain the Expanded Programme of Immunization and strengthen the expansion of the national sexual and reproductive health programme, which essentially targets the health of the mother and child.

- The UDF is strongly committed to fully implementing the on-going reforms including the Reform of Central Medical Stores and increasing participation and involvement of local populations in the organization and management of Central and District hospitals.
- UDF will strengthen support and supervision for the delivery of services at the district level to ensure the most effective and efficient use of all health care resources.
- To cement UDF's commitment to Universal Health Care, government will design and enforce a health financing policy for more rational internal resource allocation by levels in the health sector, and through equity based and pro-poor policies.
- UDF will promote equity by updating the resource allocation formula in light of devolution of health services, and will ensure that additional resources and new investment into the sector is equitably and efficiently utilized in order to meet the most vulnerable groups, particularly the poor, women, children and those living in under served rural areas.

