

Statement of David J. Young
Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Malawi
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
September 30, 2021

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am honored to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to be the next Ambassador to the Republic of Malawi. I appreciate the confidence the President and my colleagues at the Department of State have shown in me through this nomination. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and other Members of Congress and staff to advance U.S. interests in Malawi.

As I appear before you today, I wish to acknowledge the steadfast support I have received throughout my career from my wonderful life partner, my wife Diane Weisz Young, and our children Paul and Sarah, as well as my brothers Keith and Terry, and in-laws Howard, Ann, and Gregg Weisz. The inspiration and love I have received from my family have inspired my public service across 32 years working for the Department of State.

The United States has a wide range of overlapping interests in Malawi – from strengthening democracy and promoting respect for human rights to support for market economics and inclusive growth, from investments in health and education to support for the country's peacekeeping efforts across the African continent. Our assistance programs mirror these interests. Our governance programming bolsters the country's democracy and helps our Malawian partners promote respect for human rights, combat corruption, and promote better performance by government agencies. Our bilateral trade and investment engagements hold promise to help lift Malawians out of poverty and to help American companies interested in investment. The U.S. encourages Malawi to move along a sustainable development trajectory that curves toward expanding trade as a means to increase prosperity. Our investments in Malawi's human capital help to build a healthy, educated, and self-reliant population.

Malawi today stands at a high point in its international profile and regional leadership. Its independent judiciary overturned the flawed 2019 presidential election, and the victory of President Lazarus Chakwera in 2020 marked only the second election re-run on the continent and the first to unseat an incumbent. The peaceful transition of power that followed was a testament to Malawians' commitment to democratic ideals. President Chakwera assumed leadership of the

16-member Southern African Development Community in August and in this role is helping contribute to pro-market, good governance reforms in Malawi and across the region. If confirmed, I will work to expand our partnership with President Chakwera's government to advance these mutual interests.

The primary responsibility of any ambassador is the protection of American citizens and American interests. In Malawi, that now includes joining the global fight to contain the spread of COVID-19. For decades we have supported Malawi's efforts to combat HIV/AIDs. In doing so we have saved millions of lives, and we have become the partner of choice for health programming. I was pleased to see the recent arrival in Lilongwe of more than 300,000 U.S.-provided Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine doses. If confirmed, I will serve as a faithful steward of these investments to ensure and expand the impact of our citizens' unmatched generosity.

Malawi's heavy dependence on agriculture offers opportunities for U.S. government and private sector engagement. American expertise can advance efforts towards crop diversification, generate greater revenue, and fight poverty through improved yields. Having worked on African issues for the past decade, and with more than five years' service in southern Africa, I am also cognizant of the worker exploitation occurring in the sector. Malawi must do more to combat human trafficking, including protecting vulnerable workers and prosecuting those responsible for forced labor. If confirmed, I will work with Malawian, American, and international partners to support these efforts.

The United States has enjoyed decades of close collaboration with the Malawian military. The Malawian Defense Force's apolitical posture following the annulment of the 2019 elections and the subsequent transfer of power speaks to the strength of its independence and its unshakeable commitment to democracy. Malawian soldiers contribute to peacekeeping operations in some of the world's most dangerous places. Like others, I mourn the death of a Malawian peacekeeper killed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in May this year. If confirmed, I hope to find new ways for Malawi to further enshrine itself as a net exporter of security.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be honored to respond to any questions.