



REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

SPEECH

BY

HONOURABLE PETER MUKHITO, MP

MINISTER OF HOMELAND SECURITY

ON

THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH

OF

THE NZIKA DIGITAL ID

AT

BINGU INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE,

LILONGWE

WEDNESDAY, 16TH SEPTEMBER 2026

SALUTATION

- Honourable Shadric Namalomba, MP, Minister of Information and Communication Technology;
- Honourable Roza Mbilizi Fatch, MP, Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development;
- Honourable Madalitso Baloyi, MP, Minister of Health and Sanitation;
- Honourable Norman Chisale, MP, Deputy Minister of Homeland Security;
- Dr Justin Saidi, Chief Secretary to Government;
- Your Excellency Ms Rebecca Adda-Dontoh, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Malawi;
- Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
- Mrs Linda Pacharo Moyo, Secretary for Homeland Security;
- Mr Patrick Machika, Principal Secretary for the National Registration Bureau;

- His Lordship Richard Banda, Mayor of the City of Lilongwe;
- Senior Government Officials;
- Representatives of the Private Sector and Civil Society;
- Development Partners;
- Members of the Media;
- Distinguished Guests;
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good morning.

It is a great honour to join you as we mark an important milestone in Malawi's digital transformation and commemorate Africa Identity Day and Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day.

I convey the warm greetings of **His Excellency Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika**, President of the Republic of Malawi, whose Government remains committed to modernising public services and making them more accessible, efficient and responsive.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, we are not simply launching another application.

We are changing the way Malawians prove who they are.

We are taking national identity into the digital age.

And we are making a clear commitment: no Malawian should be denied an essential service

simply because a physical National ID card has not yet reached their hands.

That is the purpose of the Nzika Digital ID, delivered through the Nzika Wallet.

IDENTITY IS DIGNITY

Our theme, “**My Identity. My Shadow. Never Apart,**” reminds us that identity is inseparable from the individual.

Just as a shadow follows us wherever we go, our identity should accompany us throughout life.

Identity enables us to access services, participate in the economy, exercise our rights and affirm our citizenship.

A National ID is therefore not merely a card.

It is dignity.

It is belonging.

It is access.

It is opportunity.

Because when identity is delayed, opportunity may also be denied.

WHY THE NZIKA WALLET MATTERS

Government, through the National Registration Bureau, has made significant progress in expanding national registration. This progress has also increased demand for the production and distribution of physical cards.

The Nzika Wallet provides a practical response by allowing citizens to access and present verified identity credentials securely and digitally.

Let me be absolutely clear:
the Nzika Wallet does not replace the physical National ID card. It complements it.

Those who prefer a physical card will continue to use it. Those willing and able to use a digital credential will now have that option.

Modern Government must adapt services to the citizen—not force the citizen to adapt to Government.

INCLUSION AND SECURITY

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Digital transformation must remove barriers, not create new ones.

Citizens without smartphones, people living in rural areas, older persons, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups must not be left behind.

The Nzika Digital ID must therefore be guided by four principles:

Accessibility. Efficiency. Inclusion. Security.

Accessibility means reducing unnecessary delays.

Efficiency means improving services while reducing costs.

Inclusion means ensuring that digitalisation serves every Malawian.

And security must remain non-negotiable.

There must be no shortcuts with personal data, no compromise on cybersecurity and no tolerance for abuse of citizens' information.

Technology must empower citizens—not expose them.

THE MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Secure digital identity will help banks verify customers more efficiently, strengthen social protection programmes, support business transactions and enable Government institutions to deliver services faster.

But the true measure of success will not be today's ceremony.

It will be what happens after today.

If a young person accesses an essential service without unnecessary delay, we will have succeeded.

If a farmer verifies his or her identity more easily when seeking financial services, we will have succeeded.

If Government serves citizens faster, more securely and at lower cost, we will have succeeded.

Our ambition must therefore go beyond digitising an ID card.

We must digitise convenience.

We must digitise efficiency.

We must digitise trust.

EVERY CHILD MUST COUNT

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Civil registration begins with recognising every child.

Since 2015, more than four million births have been registered through the national civil registration system.

Malawi also inherited a substantial historical backlog of unregistered children, estimated at approximately eight million by 2022.

Government responded by launching the National Birth Registration Campaign. Four of its seven planned phases have been completed, registering approximately four million previously unregistered children.

Three phases remain, covering ten districts. I therefore appeal to our development partners to help us complete this important national undertaking.

Because every registered child is more than a statistic.

That child is recognised.

That child is protected.

That child becomes visible to the State.

That is the essence of Sustainable Development Goal 16.9: legal identity for all by 2030.

BUILDING A COMPLETE IDENTITY SYSTEM

The National Registration Bureau has registered approximately **13.5 million** eligible citizens in the national identity system and **6.6 million** children in the civil registration system.

Government aims to register an additional **3.4 million** children by the end of this year, taking Malawi closer to universal legal identity coverage.

Citizens can now begin the registration process online before visiting an NRB office, reducing queues and saving time.

Birth registration is increasingly taking place at the point of birth in major health facilities, while death registration has been decentralised to health facilities across the country.

I am also pleased to announce that the National Registration Bureau is ready to commence marriage registration.

This brings Malawi closer to a complete civil registration system—from birth, to marriage, to death.

PARTNERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY

I congratulate the National Registration Bureau on this important innovation.

Government also expresses its sincere gratitude to the European Union, Norway, Ireland, the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, UNICEF, UNDP and all partners supporting Malawi's civil registration and identity agenda.

I call upon Government institutions to support the implementation of this initiative; the private sector to embrace digital identity verification responsibly; and all Malawians to protect their personal information.

To the National Registration Bureau, I say:

Be ambitious, but be careful.

Be innovative, but remain inclusive.

Move quickly, but never compromise security.

Behind every identity record is a human being

whose dignity, privacy and rights must be protected.

POLICY PRONOUNCEMENT

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In fulfilment of the commitment made by **His Excellency Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika** in the **2026–2027** State of the Nation Address, I am pleased to announce that, with effect from **16th September 2026**, the National Registration Bureau will commence issuing National ID cards without an expiry date.

This reform recognises a simple but fundamental principle:

A person's identity does not expire.

Identity verification will increasingly rely on real-time biometric checks against the National Registration Bureau database, ensuring that information remains secure, accurate and verifiable.

This reform will modernise Malawi's identity management system while reducing the inconvenience and cost of repeated card renewals.

OFFICIAL LAUNCH

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We began by saying that identity should follow every Malawian like a shadow.

Today, we take an important step towards making that promise real.

It is therefore my singular honour and privilege to officially launch:

THE NZIKA DIGITAL ID, DELIVERED THROUGH THE NZIKA WALLET—MALAWI'S NATIONAL DIGITAL ID INITIATIVE.

May this innovation become a trusted companion to every Malawian.

May it strengthen our public services, advance our digital economy and protect the dignity and rights of our people.

And may it help build a more inclusive, prosperous and digitally empowered Malawi.

My Identity. My Shadow. Never Apart.

May God bless Malawi.

I thank you.