



**OPENING REMARKS BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR
PROFESSOR SAMSON SAJIDU
TO MARK THE OPENING SESSION FOR THE HEALTH POLICY AND
BIostatISTICS RESEARCH ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOP ON
MONDAY, 6TH OCTOBER, 2025 FROM 8:30 AM**

SALUTATIONS

1. The MoH Director of Planning and Policy, Dr. Gerald Manthalu,
2. The MoH Deputy Directors, Research, Malaria, Reproductive Health, and EPI
3. The Science for Africa Foundation Programme Manager - Policy, Prof. Uzma Alam
4. The Programme Director for Sub-Saharan Africa Consortium for Advanced Biostatistics (SSACAB) – Wits University, Prof. Tobias Chirwa
5. The Programme Manager for SSACAB – Wits University, Ms. Caroline Vika
6. The National Planning Commission Acting Director for Learning, Dr. Andrew Jamali
7. The Commissioner of the National Statistics Office, Mr. Shelton Kanyanda
8. The Representative of the Executive Director of MwAPATA, Dr. Christone Nyondo
9. The Representative of Malawi Liverpool Wellcome Programme, Dr. James Chirombo
10. The UNIMA Executive Dean of SNAS, Prof. Cosmo Ngongondo
11. The UNIMA Executive Dean of SLEG, Prof. Happy Kayuni

12. The MUBAS Executive Dean of Applied Sciences, Assoc. Prof. Mphatso Kamndaya
13. The KUHES Director of ACEPHEM, Prof. Adamson Muula
14. Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Greetings! It is a great honour for the University of Malawi to host this workshop on the **Health Policy and Biostatistics Research Engagement**, which is, to the best of our knowledge, the first of its kind in the country. I therefore thank you all for prioritizing this event and attending to our invitation.

In particular, I thank the **Ministry of Health**, represented by many directorates here, **for accepting to co-host this workshop** with us. Similarly, I extend my sincere thanks to our partner institution, the **University of Witwatersrand** in South Africa, particularly the SSACAB programme, for the **continued collaboration** with the University of Malawi in many aspects, including co-supporting this event.

The University of Malawi continually challenges itself to be more than just a human resource production entity. But, a **Centre of Excellence** in training and research. So, your presence here is not by mistake, but you will **“Connect with Excellence”**.

Modern-day public health decisions and policies are increasingly **data-driven**. Unfortunately, the **dynamics of society’s health** requiring interventions **keep evolving**. So, the importance of biostatistics research cannot be overemphasized. This is the reason the University of Malawi introduced programmes on biostatistics years back to build capacity in this area.

Over the years, **adequate research output on biostatistics and related fields** has been generated by training and research institutions in the country, helping to improve society's health. However, **mechanisms for utilizing these research findings in health policy** have not been seriously discussed.

This workshop is hence crucial for the future of the health sector in the country. It provides a new chapter for a **working collaboration between the Ministry of Health and the University** in terms of unlocking potential for local solutions to the challenges the country's health sector continues to face. I therefore ask participants to engage actively and come up with viable approaches for the continued utilization of the University's research in health policymaking.

Before I wind up, I would like to recognize the financial support made towards this event by the **Centre for Resilient Agri-Food Systems (CRAFS)** at the University of Malawi, with funding from the **World Bank**. CRAFS has been very pivotal in supporting various research initiatives at the University of Malawi. We are therefore grateful to the World Bank for this funding.

I would also like to recognize the financial contribution made by our partner, **SSACAB at the University of Witwatersrand**, towards this event, with funding from **Wellcome Trust**. We are always thankful to SSACAB for the successful collaboration we have had on biostatistics research over the years.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the **Science for Africa Foundation** team, as well as the **SSACAB** team for sparing time to attend this event **in person**. You are indeed dedicated to advancing scientific research in the region.

Finally, thanks to the **local organizing team at UNIMA**: The Head of Research, Head of Department of Mathematical Sciences, Postgraduate Coordinator for Biostatistics Programme, Executive Dean of SNAS, Executive Dean of SLEG, and all supporting staff for working around the clock to make this workshop a success.

To the **media teams**, I thank you for your continued efforts in **research dissemination**. This workshop and its output require your expertise in disseminating their values. We need all higher education institutions to see

the value of these efforts and join UNIMA and Wits University in having this research-and-policy working collaboration with various Government sectors.

With these remarks, I declare the Workshop Opened.

Thank you.