Press release
For immediate release
13 October 2026

Lighting Up Malawi’s Future: Construction Begins on Mzuzu’s New Renewable Energy Training Hub

Backed by the European Union and delivered by UNOPS, the facility will equip youth with solar technology skills to power Malawi’s green economy.



- Part of the EUR 55 million Zantchito Programme, the Mzuzu centre will specialize in solar photovoltaics and clean energy systems to close the national skills gap, in a gender-sensitive and inclusive way.

Mzuzu.— Construction has officially begun on the Renewable Energy Centre of Vocational Excellence at Mzuzu Technical College. Specializing in solar photovoltaics and clean energy systems, the facility will train the critical workforce needed to power Malawi's hospitals, schools, and businesses.

The Mzuzu centre is being developed under the Zantchito – Skills for Jobs Programme, a EUR 55 million initiative funded by the EU, aiming at aligning technical training directly with private-sector demand.

The UNOPS-led component combines infrastructure development, modern equipment installation, and maintenance planning to ensure long-term sustainability, while generating immediate local employment in Mzuzu.

"As we break ground today, we must remember that a building, on its own, is not development. It becomes development when it equips young people with skills that employers need, when women can enter technical professions on equal terms, and when the institution has the capacity to operate and maintain the facility for years to come", said **Massimo Diana, UNOPS Director for East and Southern Africa.**

Breaking down historic gender barriers in technical trades is also a central pillar of the initiative. Beyond the physical design of the new infrastructure, the programme actively supports pathways for female students to enter the renewable energy sector.

“We cannot achieve sustainable development without mainstreaming renewable energy, and we cannot grow without a skilled workforce,” said Hon. **Joel Chigona, Minister of Labour, Skills and Innovation**. “This Centre will prioritize the enrollment of young women, equipping them with the cutting-edge green skills they need to step out of this college and lead our clean energy transition.”

Achieving this vision and transforming the national TVET ecosystem requires a unified, multi-stakeholder approach. Delivered in collaboration with the Government of Malawi, the Technical, Entrepreneurial and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TEVETA) and the British Council the programme provides a key platform to align international expertise with local leadership.

“Investing in clean energy skills has a place right at the cross-section of climate action, energy access, private-sector growth, and youth employment. As we celebrate EU Green Diplomacy Week, this centre of excellence exemplifies how sustainable energy creates economic opportunities while tackling environmental challenges.” concluded **Daniel Aristi-Gaztelumendi, Ambassador of the European Union to Malawi**.

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Notes to the editors:

Picture: The main stakeholders at the Mzuzu Technical College on the occasion of the groundbreaking ceremony (13 October 2026).

High-resolution image: Available for download here.

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About UNOPS

UNOPS offers practical solutions across peace and security, humanitarian and development operations. We help the United Nations, governments and other partners, to manage projects, and deliver sustainable infrastructure and procurement across the world.
Read more: www.unops.org.

About the European Union

The European Union (EU) has maintained a partnership with Malawi since 1976, focusing on development cooperation. The EU supports Malawi's ambition to develop a more sustainable and robust economy, bolster democratic and economic governance, and advance human development in line with Malawi's 2063 Vision.
Read more: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/malawi/who-we-are_en

About Ministry of Labour, Skills and Innovation in Malawi

The Ministry of Labour in Malawi manages national employment, labor relations, and vocational training (TEVET). Located in Lilongwe, it enforces labour laws and ensures workers' rights are respected.
Read more: https://labour.gov.mw/