

Press release
For immediate release
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Groundbreaking to start the construction of a centre of vocational excellence at Lilongwe Technical College

The Government of Malawi, the European Union and UNOPS launch construction of four specialised centres to transform youth employability in Malawi



- The European Union (EU) is funding the design, construction and equipping of four specialised Centres of Vocational Excellence in Malawi, with implementation led by UNOPS.
- The project will improve equitable, safe, and gender-balanced access to quality Technical, Entrepreneurial, and Vocational Education and Training for staff and students at Lilongwe, Salima, Mzuzu Technical Colleges, and the Malawi Institute of Tourism.

Lilongwe.— A groundbreaking ceremony celebrated the start of construction of the Centre of Vocational Excellence for Agriculture Mechanisation at the Technical College of Lilongwe. The Government of Malawi, in partnership with UNOPS, has launched the design, construction and equipping of four such centres, with different areas of

specialisation, under the Zantchito – Skills for Jobs Programme, a EUR 55 million initiative funded by the EU.

The project, among other things, aims to modernize the Technical, Entrepreneurial, and Vocational Education and Training sector by transforming **Lilongwe, Salima, and Mzuzu Technical Colleges**, alongside the **Malawi Institute of Tourism**, into centres of vocational excellence equipped with modern facilities and industry-relevant tools, helping to close the gap between graduate skills and labour-market demand.

Delivered in collaboration with the Technical, Entrepreneurial and Vocational Education and Training Authority, the British Council and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Zantchito strengthens institutional systems and aligns training with private-sector needs.

UNOPS implements a EUR 21.5 million component of the programme that combines infrastructure development, modern equipment installation and long-term maintenance planning to ensure the four Centres of Vocational Excellence operate as sustainable, high-performance training environments.

“This partnership is about more than infrastructure; it is about building the foundation for Malawi’s economic future,” said **Rebecca Adda-Dontoh, United Nations in Malawi Resident Coordinator**. “By improving physical facilities and providing modern equipment, we are creating a conducive learning environment that empowers young Malawians—especially women—to secure decent jobs or start their own enterprises”.

“Through its oversight, the Ministry of Labour, Skills and Innovation is ensuring that the TEVET system responds to evolving labour-market requirements and aligns with the National Job Creation Strategy (2022). This initiative reflects our shared commitment to equipping young people with skills that match today’s job market and creating pathways to decent employment and entrepreneurship,” said **Hon Joel Chigona, Malawi Ministry of Labour, Skills and Innovation**.

“Today marks an important milestone – the EU stands ready to support young people to forge more resilient paths for themselves towards better life prospects, ultimately contributing to Malawi’s sustainable growth as an economy and a society,” concluded **Daniel Aristi-Gaztelumendi, Ambassador of the European Union to Malawi**.

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Notes to the editors:

Picture: Symbolic groundbreaking ceremony showing the laying of the first stone of the Lilongwe Technical College (17 March 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/>