

**A PROPOSAL FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF THE POST-GRADUATE  
DIPLOMA IN LABOUR ADMINISTRATION STUDIES**

**WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE  
STUDIES IN THE FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AT CHANCELLOR  
COLLEGE-UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI**

**BY**

**KALANI MBEYE MALEMA**

DISTRICT LABOUR OFFICER / INSPECTOR FOR MG-MINISTRY OF LABOUR  
AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING, P/BAG 344, CAPITAL CITY- LILONGWE 3.

*CELEPHONE NUMBERS: (265) 0888 594 242; or (265) 0999 473 169. Email  
address: [kalani.malema@gmail.com](mailto:kalani.malema@gmail.com)*

***April, 2014.***

*BACKGROUND.* It is becoming commonly known by most labour administrators that the quality of any state labour service system depends upon the academic and professional quality of its labour officers. The quality of our country labour service system, particularly the labour inspectorate service system, is greatly affected by the calibre of its labour inspectors. There are very few “qualified professional” labour officers in the system especially in the area of labour inspectorate services. There is a very severe shortage of qualified country labour inspectors in the Ministry of Labour, and yet Malawi is a developing country whose informal employment sector, mainly from the agricultural and trading industries constituting the greatest employed labour force, would mostly need labour inspectorate services for protection. We need to recruit and train labour officers/inspectors for our country district labour offices at the appropriate level to professionally handle workplace labour issues and conduct inspection services efficiently and effectively in our numerous emerging workplace establishments across the country.

There are graduates and diploma holders in various disciplines from the Malawi public universities and colleges employed and working as labour officers in the Ministry of Labour who are a very good catchment area, in the first instance, for the proposed post-graduate diploma in labour administration studies to be trained for handling and conducting labour services in workplace establishments in the country. The problem is that there are no specialized labour administration study programmes being offered at any of the Malawi public universities and colleges. This is a result, I hope, of the fact that for many years the government looked at labour administration as less academic and professional area assumed to be within any public administration course programme, yet this is far from the reality. Labour administration according to International Labour Organisation (ILO) is a major independent field on its own that deserves attention by any of the developing countries. Today, both the Malawi government and the University should be able to realize the need and importance of effective labour service delivery. The new needs should dictate on the University and the Ministry of Labour, a need to venture and establish a relevant training programme for producing appropriately qualified young men and women to professionally handle workplace labour issues and conduct inspection services.

There is some assumption to suggest that the academic social sciences degree programmes such as the HRM and engineering degrees taught at Chancellor College and Polytechnic respectively equip the graduates with knowledge and skills to easily handle labour services with minimum in-service guidance and supervision. However, there is need for such graduates to undergo a specialized

labour training programme if they have to function competently and effectively in the employment workplace situations. The Ministry of Labour is aware of this problem and thus the inclusion in the MGDS II, the action to recruit and train labour inspectors in order for Malawi Government to deliver its strategy of promoting labour administration systems. It is against this background that I propose for the introduction of the post-graduate diploma in labour administration studies (LAS) programme at Chancellor College to train for the award of specialized post-graduate diplomas for some incumbent labour officers and those graduates and diplomats wishing to acquire some specialized skills in the area of labour administration services.

It is my belief that if the current and all existing “unqualified” labour inspectors were to receive appropriate training and relevant professional skills and knowledge for effective delivery of inspectorate services, then such labour inspectors would enhance the needed change and improvements in the delivery of labour services as a whole and labour inspectorate services in particular. With the professional skills and knowledge, they would be confident labour inspectors and effective professionals while at work.

To solve the identified problem, I propose that a labour studies post-graduate training programme, LAS, be established at Chancellor College so that all “unqualified” labour inspectors and those intending to join the Ministry of Labour can be qualified for labour services. I propose that the LAS programme should be conducted during weekends, that is, on Saturdays and Sundays. Candidates for the programme should be holders of any bachelors’ degree or its equivalent in any field from any recognized university colleges and in certain special cases diploma holders could be considered.

The advantages of this training programme timeframe arrangement can be many. For instance, the government is not going to lose the services of its already employed labour officers while on training since the training is locally done and during the weekends. Another advantage of the weekends training programme by those already working, is that it would bring relevant practical learning aspects very lively. Lastly, the training programme will be cost saving on part of Government. For instance, Government in its MGDS II identified the “recruitment and training of labour inspectors” as one of the action points to deliver its strategy of “promoting labour administration systems”. Government would therefore minimize costs to train such recruited labour inspectors locally at Chancellor College other than to train them elsewhere abroad for the attainment of similar required skills and qualifications through a training programme (of labour administration studies or its equivalent) that is currently not offered by any of our State universities and training colleges.

The following are among the specific objectives of the LAS programme: to train learners (labour officers/inspectors in labour administration relevant skills such as conciliation, negotiation/mediation and supervisory and inspection skills; to develop and instill in the learners professional ethics, planning skills, interpersonal relations/skills and development, implementation and evaluation skills; to develop and boost high professional self-confidence high aspirations for professional success and motivation for further professional development; and to develop a linkage between the department of Political and Administrative Studies at Chancellor College and the Ministry of Labour. Note that “the need for effective cooperation amongst institutions such as research institutes, universities, the prevention services of social security authorities and with experts, as well as the need to coordinate labour /inspection service activities” is one of the five ILO’s recommended principles set forth in its Labour Inspection Conventions and Recommendations.

*TARGET AUDIENCE.* The target audience for the LAS programme should comprise all graduate/diplomat labour officers who are currently working in the Ministry of Labour and those from college who intend to work as labour inspectors and experts. There are currently about 63 labour inspectors in the service.

*SUBJECTS (COURSES) OF THE PROPOSED TRAINING.* The subjects of the study at (LAS) level training should include the following: *Introduction to Labour Administration; Industrial Relations* (Theories and Principles of Industrial Relations or Industrial Relations Theory and Practice, Comparative Industrial Relations, Industrial Relations in Malawi); *Labour Protection* (Workers Compensation, Pensions administration, Occupational Safety and Health, Social Protection, Labour Disputes Settlement); *Labour Inspection* (Theories and Principles of Labour Inspection, Labour Inspection international standards, Practical aspects of Labour Inspection- Planning / Implementation etc, The Role of Labour Inspection, Labour Inspection Visits and Report Writing); *Labour and Employment* (Labour law, Employment Law, Labour Legislative Acts in Malawi, Social Protection Policies, Employment promotion); and *Labour Policy Research* (Policy Research and Analysis, Labour Economics, Policy Planning and Formulation).

*TRAINING VENUE AND PERSONNEL.* The LAS programme should be established and run at Chancellor College in Zomba by the existing staff of the Department of Political and Administrative Studies and Ministry of Labour appointed expert (s) in Labour administration for practical subjects of the programme.

In case the College department does not have the lecturers with expertise within the field of labour administration, then Government/University should send at least two departmental lecturers to train abroad in the labour

administration studies by foreign experts at University Colleges where appropriate facilities and training personnel are available so that they acquire the needed training expertise and come back to lead their fellow departmental members in the running of the LAS programme.

*LENGTH OF TRAINING.* The LAS students should be on the course for two years consisting of at least sixteen learning months (i.e. at least 128 learning days equivalent to 18 weeks of full-time learning).

*THE TRAINING INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS.* The instructional techniques to be used in the LAS training programme will include: Lectures, guided group discussion, set library research, topical seminars and tutorials. Examinations will also be used as students' testing tool.

*TRAINING PROGRAMME PRE-PLANNING ARRANGEMENTS.* If this proposal can be found to be viable, then the Government and the University should be able to sit together to develop logistical strategies for producing well qualified labour inspectors; to agree on the standard qualifications for entry into the programme; to decide on the content of the training courses; to decide on the duration of the training programme and the selection procedure among other things. It is proposed that at least ten programme cohorts of about 15 students each could be necessary to produce the current required quantity of labour inspectors in Malawi. Each cohort should have students of both sexes. At present, the Government – Ministry of Labour and Mpemba Staff Development Institute (SDI) jointly run the Malawi civil service (Labour law) correspondent studies for labour officers that leads into sitting for the Malawi civil service (Labour law) examinations by labour officers. The examination is administered by SDI where the registered labour officers sit for the examinations within the offices of the District Commissioners in the country. This correspondent study facility is being pursued based on labour officer's 'own wish'. The Ministry of Labour only recommends for every labour officer to sit and pass such a civil service labour law examination. It has therefore been very difficult for this system to be proved as the reliable mode of producing someone who could be effective and qualified labour officer/inspector. Worse still, such has been the only way for the Ministry to produce its working labour inspectors of course coupled with some Ministry's organized local training workshops on labour inspections that has benefited some of the current labour inspectors but not all of them due to funding constraints.

---