

**Emmie Chigamane**, Inspector in the Department of Environment affairs , Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Management, Malawi. She coordinates management of all natural resources in Malawi. She shared her views on the challenges of managing wetlands in Malawi during the Kigali Forum for Wetlands, 8 to 12 July 2013, which took place in Kigali Rwanda.



**UNEP-TEEB:** *What do you understand by wise use smart plans for wetlands and for the context of Malawi how are you ensuring that wetlands are wisely used?*

**Emmie Chigamane:** Before this Forum we had knowledge gaps on how best to ensure that people use wetlands wisely. Meaning using the benefits they provide but without degrading them. There are wetlands in Malawi that have been degraded and we didn't know how best to make plans to restore them. We think after this Forum especially, after seeing what Rwanda is doing to restore their wetlands, we can also apply this knowledge especially in the areas of urbanization and agriculture, which are also the main issues for Malawi.

*We need to revisit our policies and we need to assess what we want for our future generation in Malawi. Let us use our wetlands wisely and sustainably for the economic development of our nation.*

**UNEP-TEEB:** *The TEEB Water and wetlands reports states that the values of wetlands are not mainstreamed into policy making. How are you ensuring the values of wetlands are recommended to policy makers?*

**Emmie Chigamane** Frankly this has not been happening in Malawi, because most government officials, decision-makers don't know the values of these ecosystems or wetlands. There is therefore a big task ahead to raise awareness and get people to understand. We need to speak to the Members of Parliament and directors, all those who make decisions, and convince them about why they should put consideration for wetlands management. I think capacity building is important, followed by information on cost benefit analysis.

**UNEP-TEEB:** *What is the key take home message from the Forum for Malawi?*

We need to revisit our policies and we need to assess what we want for our future generation in Malawi. Do we want them to find degraded resources due to development? Let us use our wetlands wisely and sustainably for the economic development of our nation.

**UNEP-TEEB: *Major challenges to doing your job as an environment inspector?***

**Emmie Chigamane** I would say knowledge gaps, lack of coordination in our policies and amongst players in the environmental sector are major challenges. For example, it is common to find that the agriculture policy encourages agriculture along the river banks because of the moisture while the environment policy is against this practice and provides for a buffer zone within which no activity should take place.

