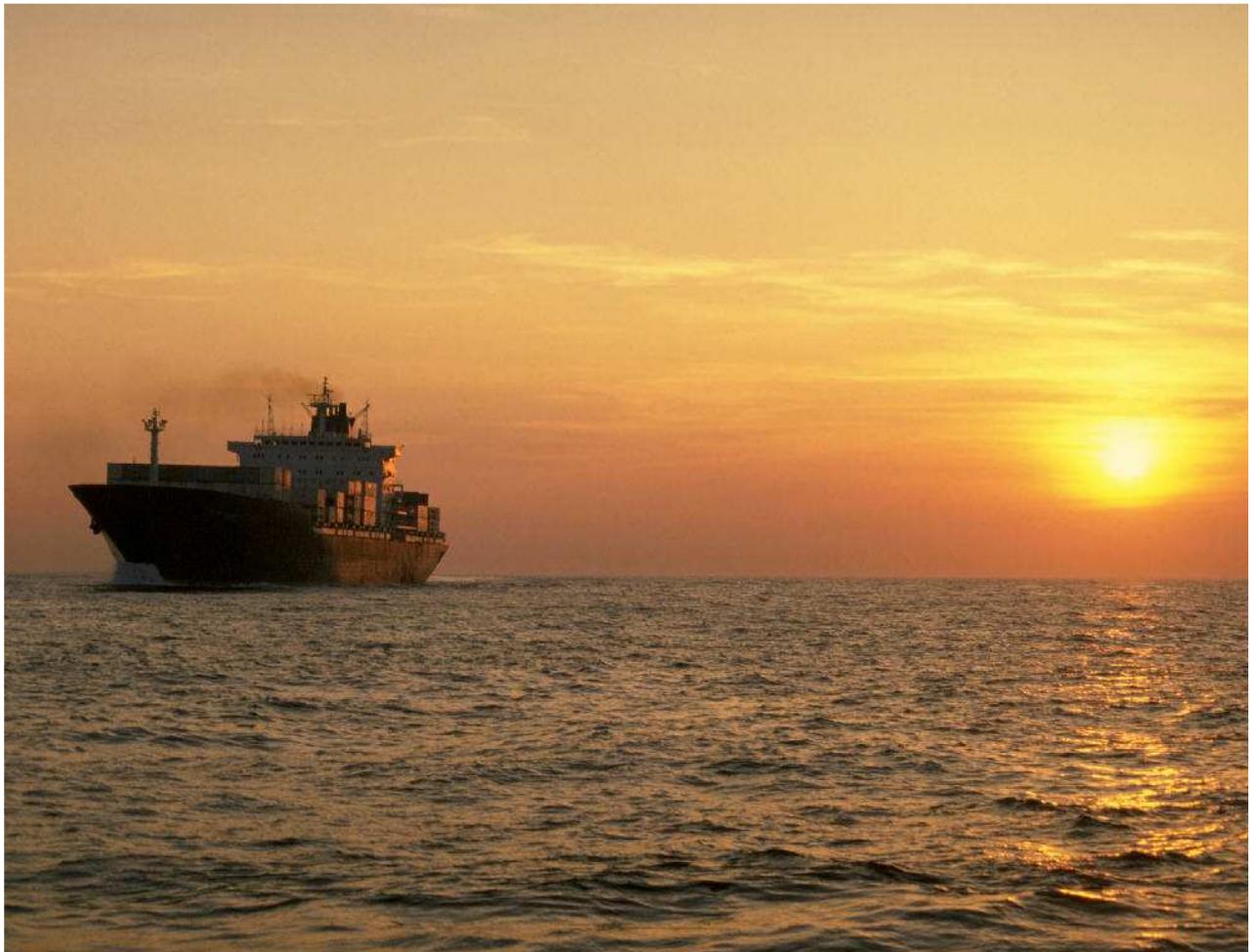


SHIPPING GOODS TO MALAWI:

A GUIDE TO BEST PRACTICE



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1. PRACTICAL ISSUES

Goods should be packed in cardboard boxes, and must be clearly labeled with the following information:

- Destination,
- Partner organisation,
- Recipient (a named individual),
- Donor individual / organisation,
- Box number,
- General description of contents.

Each box must have a unique number/code which relates to the container contents list required by customs authorities in Malawi. The approximate monetary value of each box must also be noted – zero is not acceptable, and a nominal value must be stated. The label should be securely taped down with sellotape to ensure that it will not come off during transport. A container can take up to 1000 boxes, depending on their size. Do not overfill boxes, or use boxes which are likely to be too large and heavy for loading/unloading. Note that boxes are not guaranteed to be grouped together at the customs warehouse upon arrival in Malawi, and may not be stacked in a regular order. It is therefore advisable to mark each box distinctively to ensure ease of identification. Boxes should also be marked with “Goods not for resale/commercial purposes; charity/humanitarian purposes only”, or similar.

Containers can be shipped to Blantyre or Lilongwe, by air or sea. Note that delivery of one 40 ft. container usually takes 8–12 weeks, but can sometimes take even longer. Goods can be easily damaged in containers over this period: rats chew boxes, and sea water can breach containers causing metal items to rust. It is important to pack items with as much care as possible to provide the necessary protection during transportation.

2. DUTY / IMPORT TAXES AND OTHER DOCUMENTATION

Goods must be sent to organisations pre-approved as importers/consignees by the Malawi Revenue Authority (MRA). *Schools are not recognised as valid importers by the MRA.* Although goods can be redistributed by partners in Malawi following arrival, it is necessary to first identify an operating partner in Malawi with the appropriate accreditation and a suitable distribution network to redistribute the contents of containers. Establish contact with the Scotland Malawi Partnership or the Malawi High Commission to identify suitable partners. Other charitable organisations who have previously been involved in the shipping of goods to Malawi may also be able to share contacts and redistribution networks in Malawi (see the “Contacts” section at the end of this guide).



Without the correct paperwork in place goods can spend months or years waiting to clear port.

Shipping goods to Malawi is expensive and time-consuming, and it is essential to work with a partner who is willing and able to travel to the port to receive the goods, and deal with the necessary paperwork.

Imported goods are subject to duties. Some goods can be imported duty-free, but others are taxed. Clearing agents can advise on what goods can be imported duty-free. If a duty waiver is sought, it is essential to make a written request to the Commissioner General of the MRA, *prior to shipping*. Applications for duty-waivers can take up to several weeks to process, so must be made well in advance of shipping the goods. It may be advantageous to have the partner organisation in Malawi apply for duty clearance, and it is advisable to make absolutely clear in any application to the MRA that the goods are intended solely for the use of the partner organisation and will not be sold on for use by non-entitled individuals/organisations. If a waiver is granted, this should be retained and used to support future applications.

A clearing agent must be contracted prior to shipping. The clearing agent is based in Malawi and is responsible for handling the necessary documentation to allow the shipment through customs¹. It is important that the partner organisation in Malawi should also establish contact with the clearing agent, as they will be required to exchange documents upon arrival of the shipment. It may be advisable to request that the partner organisation identifies and contracts the clearing agent, though this must be negotiated between the donor and recipient organisations.

In order to pass the goods through customs quickly, clearing agents require several documents, to be provided by the donor and/or recipient organisation:

- Bill of Landing; provided by the freight company after the container has been shipped,
- List of container contents; the monetary values of the goods must be stated (zero is unacceptable),
- List of boxes in container; sorted by destination/recipient organisation,
- Insurance certificate; insurance must be obtained for the container,
- Certificate of donation produced by the sender, outlining the charitable nature of the shipment and the nature of the link relationship between the donor and the partner in Malawi,
- Any documents provided by the MRA indicating duty clearance.

The partner organisation and/or the individual recipient in Malawi must be in possession of copies of the above documents, and will be required to make contact with the clearing agent upon arrival of the shipment. Containers cannot be released unless this documentation is in place. If containers are held up in customs upon arrival, the recipient must pay a charge for each day of storage. Customs storage may not be secure. It is therefore essential to contract a clearing agent prior to shipping, and arrange for the immediate delivery of goods to their intended destination in Malawi following



A container arriving at Ekwendeni

their arrival. Ensure that both the clearing agent and the partner organisation are in possession of all the necessary documents before the arrival of the shipment. Maintain email/phone contact with the clearing agent to receive confirmation that the goods have arrived, and have been forwarded to the intended recipient. Use a registered clearance company, and ensure that your partner in

Malawi is present to observe customs checks and the opening/unloading of the container by workers at the port. This will avoid confusion. Should there be any problems with the cargo or the documentation, ensure that you or your partner are able to pursue the matter fully and vigorously. Clearance agents can be reluctant to engage with the authorities, and may require your coercion.

3. MAKING SUITABLE & SUSTAINABLE DONATIONS

All donated goods must be appropriate to the needs of the partner organisation. A dialogue must be established between donor and partner organisation to establish precisely what goods are required. This is beneficial for four primary reasons:

- “Dumping” (sending unnecessary or unusable goods and equipment) is eliminated
- It creates sustainable institutional links and channels of communication between organisations in Scotland and Malawi
- The long-term economic and social aims of organisations in Malawi and the efforts of donor organisations in Scotland are better co-ordinated, as donations are embedded in local strategies and initiatives for growth
- Partner Organisations in Malawi can take the lead role in development projects, ensuring that their needs are met more effectively

Success in shipping goods to Malawi depends on the communication between donors and partners in Malawi. It is important that donations are made in line with long-term sustainable goals, agreed by the donor and recipient. Always listen to the partner organisation, and do not send alternatives. These may not be suitable, and could be a waste of time and money for both the donor and recipient organisations. Donors must consider the implications for the Malawian organisation should they be unable to continue donations in the future, and their potential to undermine the Malawian government to provide for their own communities².



Unless goods are specifically requested by the Malawian partner there is a danger they will sit unused

Donors must avoid creating long-term dependency links. By allowing Malawian partners to take the lead on charitable projects, the efforts of donors in Scotland can be reconciled with the immediate short-term needs of Malawian organisations and communities, and their long-term strategies for growth and development. Malawians are unlikely to refuse donations: it is the responsibility of the donor to ensure that all donated items can be put to good use.

When donating goods, always check that they are of an acceptable quality. Books with damaged spines, outdated computers and mechanical equipment which does not operate correctly are of little use in Scotland, and of little use in Malawi. ***Always remember that if the quality of an item is unacceptable in the donor country, it is unacceptable as a donation.***

The following items are generally seen as acceptable donations:

- **Education resources**

Tools for education are particularly useful, including school books, sports equipment and computers/audio-visual teaching aids. School books should be in accordance with the current school curriculum, and verified as such by the partner school prior to shipping. Secondary schools

in Malawi follow a similar curriculum to the English GSCE or Standard Grade. Some books may not be in line with the current curriculum but may be gratefully received anyway. Always check with the recipient organisation first. "Books Abroad" is a charity based in Aberdeen which currently sends books to 40 Malawian schools. Their website offers guidelines to book donors (see the Contacts section at the end of this guide).

- **Computers/electronic equipment**

All electronic and mechanical equipment must be checked for suitability and functionality prior to shipping. It is essential that electronic/mechanical items are checked and reconditioned appropriately for use in Malawi. Note that the electrical supply in Malawi is 230v. Particularly old and outdated computers are not a suitable donation. **Overall, donors should ensure that:**

- ***There is a local capacity to install and maintain any equipment provided.*** Should the equipment breakdown, could it be repaired locally? If spare parts are required, can these be obtained locally? If not, the equipment could become worthless. Bear in mind that developing countries do not always have the capacity for the safe disposal of some electrical/mechanical equipment.
- ***Running costs of the equipment can be met locally.*** If the equipment uses consumables, these must be locally available and obtainable by the partner organisation. If consumable items cannot be obtained in Malawi, donations of this kind risk creating long-term unsustainable dependency links.
- ***If specialist knowledge is required to operate the machinery, this is already in place or provisions have been made for this to be acquired locally.*** Donations of specialist equipment might be of very little use in Malawi. Its potential utility must be verified by the partner organisation prior to shipping.
- ***Surge protectors are provided to protect valuable equipment from fluctuations in the local electricity grid.*** The electrical supply is inconsistent and prone to surges, which can damage electrical equipment. Protectors can be installed at a low cost, prior to donation².

- **Drugs/Medical goods**

Medical goods must only be supplied according to the requests of recipient organisations. Again, the functionality of all mechanical equipment must be checked and verified prior to shipping, and must be useful to the recipient organisation.

Drugs/medicines must only be supplied according to the specific requests of partner organisations to ensure that they will be put to use. Always ensure that drugs/medicines are well within their use-by date (bear in mind that arrival in Malawi can take several months), and be careful not to



An anesthetic nurse in the Ekwendeni operating theatre

create an unsustainable dependency link. Consider whether the supply of medicines will benefit Malawian communities beyond their immediate use, and the likely consequences should these medicines not be supplied in the future². Also, bear in mind that some drugs require specific storage conditions which cannot be maintained in a freight container. Consult The World Health Organization internationally recommended guidelines³ for the best practice in donating drugs to developing countries for further information.

- **General tools/equipment/machinery**

Tools for woodworking/construction/general repairs are often welcome, as these help to stimulate industry in Malawi. Sewing machines are also useful. All tools and equipment should be checked for functionality and re-conditioned prior to shipping. Partner organisations should be contacted to discover precisely what tools are required.

4. ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

Items which are locally available should not normally be shipped to Malawi. The needs of local businesses should not be undermined by international donations, and transporting large volumes of goods over long distances which can be sourced locally is also environmentally unsound.

For example, items such as stationary and clothing are often included in shipments of donations. These items can be easily purchased locally in Malawi. International donations of such readily available items can damage local business and undermine the Malawian economy. In such instances, it is preferable to donate money rather than goods: this returns the money to the local economy, and benefits the long-term development of Malawi.

Although most goods are available to purchase in Malawi, an acute, short-term need for items (such as clothes, curtains and bedding) may exist which cannot be met locally. In such cases, these items may be requested by recipient organisations. Donations of goods may be advised in these circumstances. Such donations should represent the beginnings of a long-term sustainable partnership. Be careful not to create an unsustainable dependency link. Remember, it is important not to undermine local business or the government of Malawi's ability to provide for its own people. Sensitivity is required, and the needs of local businesses against those of partner organisations must be balanced by the donor.



Goods being unloaded in Malawi

It is vital to be aware of the likely impact of donated goods in the area, and their knock-on effect in the local economy.

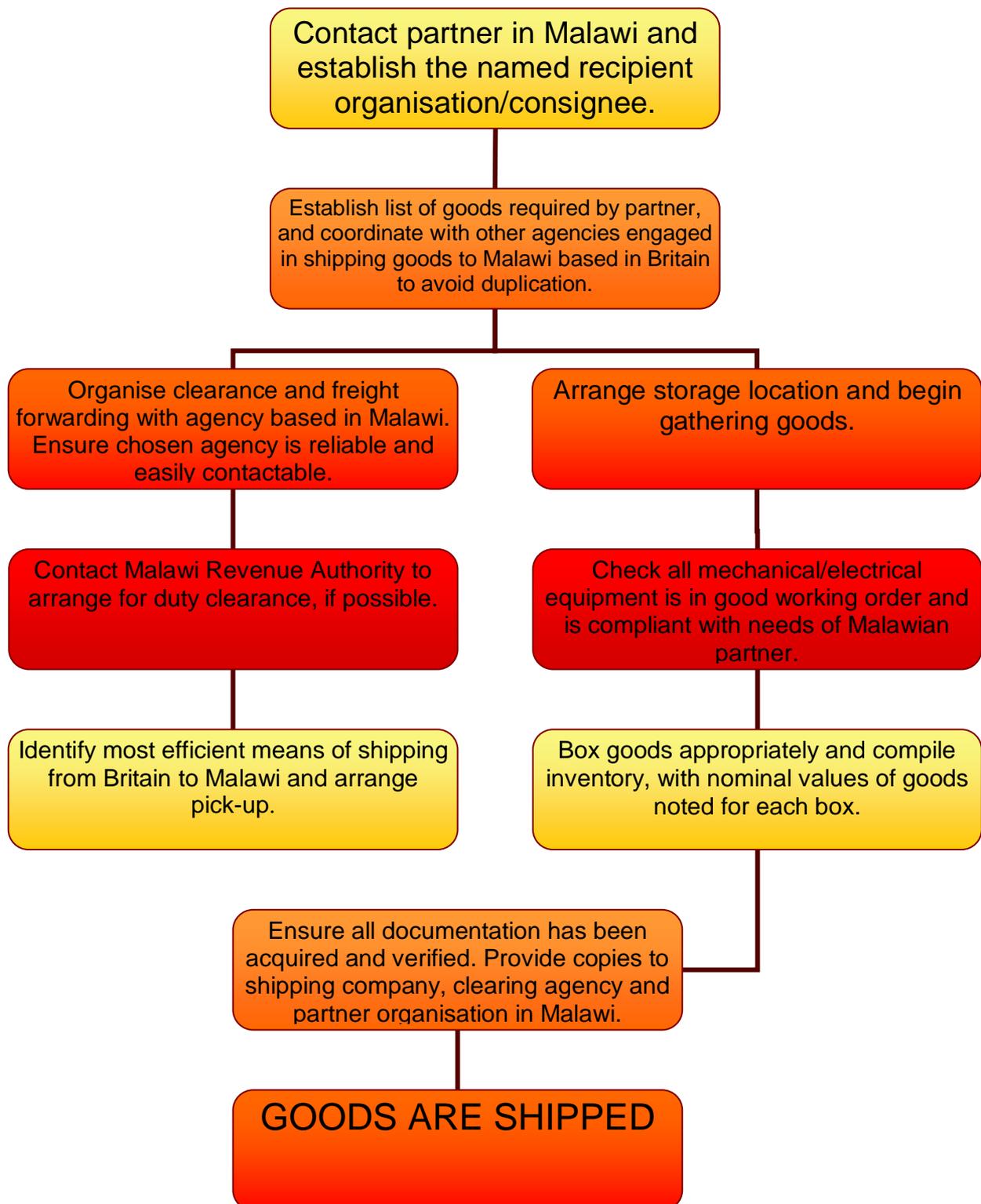
5. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS



The transportation of large volumes of goods over long distances coincides with environmental concerns, and containers must be sent on an environmentally-sensitive basis. Recycling goods by sending them to Malawi to extend their use-life is inherently sustainable, and accords with long-term goals of tackling climate change by reducing waste and carbon emissions. Waste can be further reduced by donating only those items which have been specifically requested by recipient organisations. Pooling resources with other donor

agencies also helps reduce carbon emissions, and can ultimately keep the costs of shipping down, e.g. by combining efforts to fill a single 40 foot container as opposed to two 20 foot containers. Such efforts also facilitate the coordination of donors in Scotland, thus avoiding duplication.

LOGISTICS: SCOTLAND



LOGISTICS: MALAWI



CONTACTS

Malawi Revenue Authority (M.R.A.)

Chayamba Building
Private Bag 247
Blantyre
Malawi
+ 265 (0) 622 588
mrahq@malawi.net

Any enquiries/queries regarding customs taxes and duties should be directed to the MRA.

SHIPPING TO MALAWI

Dominion Cargo Logistics

5 Yardheads
Leith
Edinburgh
EH6 6BU
Mr Tich Tamanikwa
0131 554 4194/07958723795
tich@dominioncargo.co.uk
<http://www.dominioncargo.moonfruit.com/>

A commercial company based in Leith, Edinburgh. They specialise in shipping and air freight to southern Africa, delivering to Lilongwe and Blantyre. Flights leave every week and goods are shipped at the end of every calendar month.

Tudor International Freight

Rowan Court
Green Lane
Rawdon
Leeds
LS19 7DT
0113 250 1155
info@tudorfreight.com
<http://www.tudorfreight.com>

A commercial company based in Leeds. Flights leave every week, with shipping to Lilongwe and Blantyre.

Air Malawi/Air Cargo Ltd.

Air & Cargo Services Ltd.
Unit 5 Planet Centre
Armadale Road
Feltham
Middlesex
TW14 0LW
(0)20 8917 8900
info@aircargo.co.uk

Air Cargo Ltd is the operating name of the air freight department of Air Malawi in the UK. Flights leave every Thursday from Heathrow, and pick-up from Scotland can be arranged on request. Air Malawi can also recommend clearing agents in Malawi. Contact Sylvia at Sylvia@airmalawi.co.uk or 01784 257 222.

Aria Services Limited

Unit P
Morris Farm
Old Holbrook
Horsham
W. Sussex
RH12 4TW
0845 058 4722

Air freight service. Flights leave for Malawi every Wednesday.

Mail Boxes Etc.

- 196 Rose Street
Edinburgh
EH2 4AT
- 12 South Bridge
Edinburgh
EH1 1DD

There are various branches of Mail Boxes Etc. in Scotland. This company can ship smaller boxes of goods to Malawi (max. 30 kg), using Parcel Force, UPS and FedEx. The exact cost of shipping is determined by the weight of the package, with 10 kg from around £175, and 30 kg from around £430.

FREIGHT FORWARDING/CLEARANCE AGENTS

Holy Trinity Clearing Agent

Cargo Building
Kamuzu International Airport
P.O. Box 112
Lumbadzi
Lilongwe 5
Malawi
+265 1 700 972, + 265 999 495 953
htcca@malawi.net

This clearance agent is recommended by Janet Chesney of the Chesney Trust.

Cargo Management Logistics Ltd

PO Box 40666
Kanengo
Lilongwe
cargomanagement@cmi-malawi.com

- **Lilongwe**
Cargo Agents Complex
Construction House
Kanengo Industrial Site
Area 28/65
Lilongwe
+265 01 700530, +265 01 712335, +265 01 700501, +265 01 873653,
- **Blantyre**
Makata Industrial Site

PO Box 2403
Blantyre
+265 01 876539

Clearance/freight forwarding company, with offices in Lilongwe and Blantyre.

Trans Maritime Limited

P.O. Box 434
Blantyre
Malawi
+ 265 (0) 1 676100 / 675300
info@transmaritime.net
<http://www.transmaritime.net/>

JSJ Freight International

Macleod Road
Plot No. NY 589
Makata Industrial Area
Chichiri Blantyre 3
Blantyre
+265 1675264
malawi@universalfreightorg.com

Danzas AEI Ltd.

Scott Road
Ginnery Corner
Blantyre
+265 676944

General Freight Services

Lilongwe Airport
PO Box 1598
Lilongwe
Alexander Chizuma Kaunda
genfrtsvc@sdpn.org.mw

Jay-Em Cargo (Pvt) Ltd

PO Box 63
Lumbadzi
Lilongwe
skynetblz@globemw.net,

- **Lilongwe**
Plot No 52/31
Kamuzu International Airport
Lilongwe
+265 170 0572
- **Blantyre**
PO Box 175
Blantyre

KAS Freight Ltd

PO Box 30933
Salmin Armour
Chichiri Blantyre 3

Blantyre
+265 1 873044, +265 1 874044, +265 1 876044
kasfreight@kasfreightmw.com

- **Blantyre Airport**
PO Box 30933
Chichiri, Blantyre, 3
+265 1-692013, +265 8-844476
- **Lilongwe**
PO Box 175
Kanengo Alimaunde
Plot No 28/23
Lilongwe
+265 171 2012
- **Lilongwe Airport**
PO Box 175
Mpico Cargo Agents Building
Lilongwe Airport
+265 1 701298, Fax: +265 1 701310

SDV Malawi Ltd.

Po Box 838
Blantyre

- **Blantyre**
Corner Makata and Maunde Roads
Makata Industrial Area
Blantyre
+265 0191 5410, +265 0191 5570, +265 0191 5121
sdvmw@sdvmalawi.com
- **Blantyre Airport**
PO Box 838
Chileka Airport
Blantyre
+265 0189 2262
sdvchileka@malawi.net

CHARITABLE ORGANISATIONS

Malawi Trade Schools Appeal

Balnastraid
Moniave
Thornhill
DG3 4HP
01387 260309

Provide tools and machinery, mostly to the Samaritans Trust in Blantyre.

The Chesney Trust

44 Dunmore Street
Balfron
G63 0TX
01360 440 377
dunmorecot@tiscali.co.uk

<http://chesneytrust.org/>

Janet E Chesney

Mzuzu Hotel Annexe
P.O. Box 153
Mzuzu
Malawi
+265 (0) 310 153, +265 (0) 999 392 110
tctinmalawi@chesneytrust.org

The Chesney Trust (SC037540) aims to promote education in Malawi. Janet Chesney has considerable experience in shipping goods to Malawi, and may be contacted for advice with clearance procedures.

The Raven Trust

Bay Villa
Strachur
Argyll
PA27 8DE
John and Sue Challis
01369 860 436
strachur@aol.com
<http://www.theraventrust.org>

A charity registered in Scotland (SC30260) which currently sends approximately eight 40 ft. containers to Malawi each year. Each is estimated to cost ca. £ 4000, though insurance and clearing can increase the overall cost considerably. The Raven Trust works in partnership with the CCAP (Central Church of African Presbyterians) to distribute goods in Malawi.

Books Abroad

Unit 1
Richmond Avenue Industrial Estate
Rhynie
Huntly
Aberdeenshire
AB54 4HJ
Scotland
01464 861446
<http://www.booksabroad.org.uk>

A charity registered in Scotland (SCO 11359) which currently donates books to 40 schools in Malawi.

Church of Scotland World Mission

121 George Street
Edinburgh
EH2 4YN
0131 225 5722
cfinlay@cofscotland.org.uk

The Church of Scotland World Mission is engaged in a number of development projects in Malawi, working in partnership with the Raven Trust and churches in Malawi.

Kwenderana Partnership Group

27 Broughton
East Kilbride
G27 0JU

A charitable organisation which has previously sent two vanloads of goods to churches in Ekwendeni, in partnership with the Raven Trust.

The Balmore Trust

Balmore
Torrance
Glasgow
G64 4AE

The Balmore Trust (SC008930) works with partners in the UK and in Africa and Asia in the areas of health, education, the alleviation of poverty and community development. Its policy is to work with small grass-roots organisations with local project workers supporting community initiatives.

Global Concerns Trust

4 Oxford Terrace
Edinburgh
EH4 1PX

Tools are donated across Scotland and refurbished by volunteers, many with special needs. The tools are dispatched to Malawian schools and centres for adults with disabilities. Education and Training programmes are run to teach and further develop the pupils and adults in the use of the tools. The tools enable the groups of disabled adults in Malawi to develop their skills, confidence and self esteem and help them feel more included in mainstream society.

Tropical Health and Education Trust (THET)

1 Wimpole Street (5th Floor)
London
W1G 0AE
info@thet.org
<http://www.thet.org.uk/>

REFERENCES

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<http://www.thetftp.users44.donhost.co.uk/ShippingDonations.pdf>
2. "Making Donations", THET guide,
<http://www.thetftp.users44.donhost.co.uk/DonatingItemstoYourOverseasPartner.pdf>
3. "Guidelines for drug donations", World Health Organization, 1999
http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/1999/WHO_EDM_PAR_99.4.pdf

www.scotland-malawipartnership.org

Address: Room 3/7, City Chambers, City of Edinburgh Council, High Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1YJ
Tel: 0131 529 3164 Fax: 0131 529 3168 E mail: info@scotland-malawipartnership.org
A company limited by guarantee (SC294378) and a registered Scottish charity (SC037048)