**ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION**

In Malawi women generally fall under the social welfare bracket being vulnerable to vagaries of extreme poverty, chronic hunger, severe malnourishments, and deteriorating health conditions. Despite this anomaly, women are the key to socio-economic development in the country as it has been acknowledged that 70 percent of women contribute 80 percent to food production consumed at household level (MGDS, 2011). In fact women exclusively fetch water and firewood, undertake child upbringing chores and form the largest proportion of smallholder farmers.

It is thus unfortunate that women encounter multiple health challenges: high maternal deaths (807/100,000; NSO 2008), high HIV/AIDS infection (56 percent, Chanco, 1996), gender based violence due male chauvinism (in 2009 Government declared GBV a pandemic in Malawi), have poor access to family planning and sexual reproductive services (87 percent of women do not access reproductive health services: USAID, 1997); are vulnerable to killer diseases such as malaria, fistula(girls) and breast or cervical cancers. Additionally, women who form 53% of the 18million people in Malawi are the most illiterate as a group and the most socially backward. Majority of women lives below poverty line-surviving on less than US$1 per day (The World Bank 2004) and do not participate in decision making processes hence too few in leadership positions even at national level.

It therefore makes a lot of sense to empower women economically through the proposed project so that they can make their contribution to development. Mphepozinai the catchment area in Ntcheu District of the Central Region of Malawi, has a population of 180,000 people of which 105 000 are women. It is on record that 68% of the women in Mphepozinai lives below poverty line (surviving on less than US$1 per day).\

**PROJECT MESSAGE**

The proposed BECODE Project is proposing to offer lasting solutions to the problem of acute economic poverty negatively impacting on women in impoverished households. Women are key role players in family and national development and improving their health and economic status is critical to positioning them to make their significant contribution to family and national development. This is precisely what BECODE Project is intended to achieve in the impact area.

**KEYWORDS**

The keywords include: Impoverished women, Poverty Reduction, Poorest of the Poor, Cooperative Development; Village Banking; Revolving Fund; Financial Hardships, Widespread Poverty, Viable markets, Beekeeping Enterprise.