

THE DAILY TIMES, Monday, September 22, 2014

Govt urged to update essential drugs list

BY GREGORY GONDWE

A local NGO, Health and Rights Education Programme (HREP) has called on government to update the Malawi Essential Medicines List (MEML) in order to include the 13 Life Saving Commodities for maternal and child health.

The body which called for a meeting in Lilongwe to drum up support for their initiative argued that this is in line with the global commitment Malawi government made at the

2012 UN General Assembly where the UN Commission on commodities was launched under the umbrella of 'Every Women Every Child'.

The 13 UN commodities include injectable antibiotics, antenatal corticosteroids, resuscitation devices and contraceptives implants

HREP Executive Director Maziko Matemba explained that it is important for the country to include the 13 UN commodities on MEML because it guides the procurement of drugs and medicines which are used in

the health system.

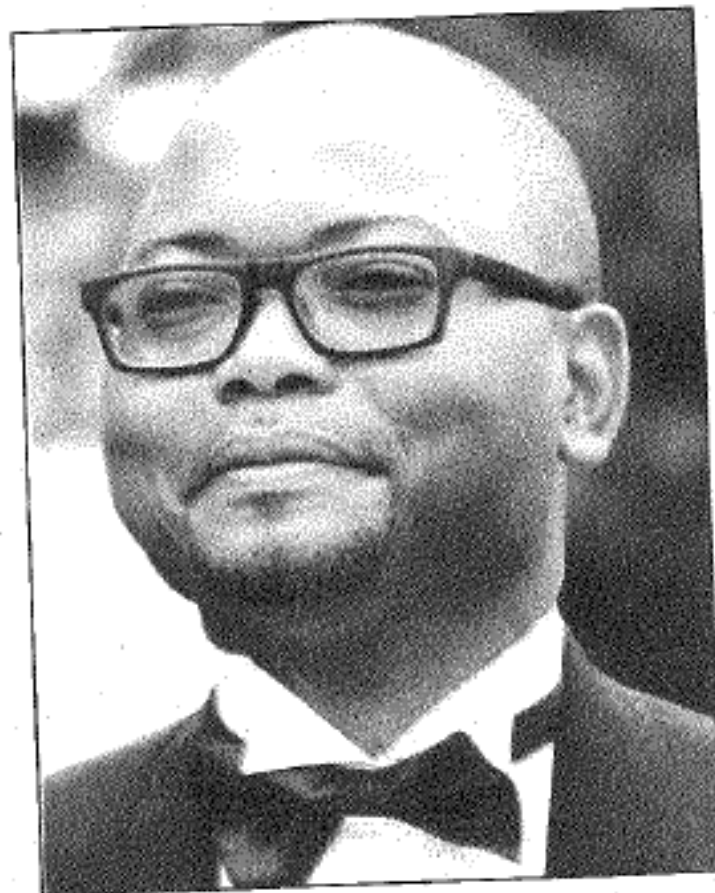
"There is need to speed the process because every year, women die from complications during pregnancy and childbirth and Malawi cannot address these maternal, newborn and child deaths without investing in life saving commodities like medicines and health supplies," explained Matemba.

He said community health workers are not nearly useful if they cannot provide access to modern contraception among others.

"A skilled birth attendant is

not as effective during delivery if she does not have access to medicines and devices for the mother and baby," said Matemba before adding: "Health care clinics cannot save children's lives without essential medicines to dispense as needed."

Assistant Representative for UNFPA Malawi Dorothy Nyasulu commended the initiative taken by health rights body but urged them to include figures which makes a compelling case when presenting the matter to government.



MATEMBA— Access to essential drugs is important

to conduct a research to establish

Dhalomba chief