



AAM launches Country Strategy Paper V

Also in this Edition

AAM, partners conduct anti GBV mass community sensitization in Lilongwe Peri-Urban

Cowlha; Y+ bang heads over ART situation.....page 4

AAM hands over K27 million school infrastructure.....page 5

Committee for more resources towards education.....page 7

AAM facilitates formation of TB, HIV/AIDS leadership.....page 9

Case study: Taking oversight to another level.....page 10

AAM aids COWFA participation at MAAFAS.....page 13

Machinga interventions impress General Assembly.....page 14

Report tips AAM on performance.....page 15



Story on page 3

**Lekani
mchitidwe
wogwilira
ana**

**Maphunziro
ndi maziko
a tsogolo
langa**

**Azibambo
limbitsani amayi
kutenga nawo
mbali pa ntchito
zokutula moyo
wawo**

AAM launches Country Strategy Paper V

In an effort to spearhead a new era in the fight against poverty and social injustice, ActionAid Malawi (AAM) on Thursday, 30th August, 2018, launched the Country Strategy Paper V (CSP V) entitled: “Acton for Social Justice”. The CSP V runs from 2018 to 2023, replacing CSP IV, “Peoples action to a poverty free Malawi” which came to an end in December, 2017.

Under the CSP V, which was launched at Bingu International Convention Centre (BICC), Lilongwe, AAM will focus on three programme priority areas; women, young women, and girls rights; resilience of people living in poverty, and civic participation and state accountability.

Speaking during the launch, AAM Board Chairperson, Professor Address Malata, said CSP V seeks to uphold AAM’s commitment to drive social change towards a more just, equitable and sustainable Malawi.

“CSP V invigorates and deepens our actions and programming to advance women’s rights, influence redistribution of power and resources and strengthen resilience of communities and movements and having women and youth-led emergency response,” she said.

Professor Malata appealed for continued support from supporters, development partners, government, civil society and the communities in the realization of the change under the CSP V

Making her remarks, AAM Executive Director, Mrs. Grace Malera, assured delegates at the function that the organisation will mobilise all the necessary efforts to ensure that the CSP V is effectively and efficiently implemented.

“Through the Country Strategy Pa-



Hon. Dr Kalliani (Left) and Professor Malata after cutting the ribbon to mark the official CSP V launch

per V, we have outlined key organisational priorities on which we will put greater focus for us to deliver.

These include: strengthening financial management systems; robust resource mobilisation strategy; enhancing organisation profile, communication and visibility; strengthening of our organisational culture and human resources management systems; implementing a robust monitoring evaluation accountability and learning system and strengthening of our internal governance structures,” she said.

Delivering his key-note address, Minister of Health and Population, Honourable Atupele Muluzi, said it was pleasing to note that the three programme priority areas of AAM CSP V are in line with several of Malawi’s development priorities in the Malawi’s overarching policy documents—the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy III, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals—aimed at creating a just society where resources are sustainably utilized to safeguard lives and well-being of all citizens.

Muluzi applauded AAM for the key role it is playing in fighting TB, HIV

and Aids through joint TB and HIV and AIDS programme . “

“This programme and many other programmes ActionAid Malawi implements in the areas of women’s rights; governance; climate change and resilience building; to mention a few, exemplify the important role non-governmental organisations play in complimenting government efforts towards the attainment of sustainable development for the people of Malawi,” he said.

In her remarks, Minister of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare, Honourable Dr. Jean Kalilani, who was the guest of honour at the function, hailed AAM for placing emphasis on women and children under CSP V, saying targeting such groups is key to reducing poverty in the country.

She said her ministry will continue to work with AAM in the various interventions on women and children welfare. Before the function, the two ministers toured various AAM pavilions show-casing achievements registered under the CSP IV. The function was also marked by traditional performances by re-known such as Chindime and Phungwako.

AAM, partners take anti VAWG campaign to LL Peri-Urban



Driving the message home: Children carrying placards condemning violence against women and girls during the launch at Chatata ground in Lilongwe

ActionAid Malawi (AAM) and Women Judges Association of Malawi (WOJAM) in partnership with Police and Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare in July, 2018, conducted the mass community sensitizations on gender-based violence against children, women and young women in Lilongwe Peri-Urban. The sensitizations, which ran from 24 to 27th July, reached out to communities in Chinsapo, Kawale, Kauma, Area 49, Chatata and Area 25.

Speaking at the launch at Chatata ground in Lilongwe, WOJAM Vice Chairperson, Justice Ivy Kamanga, bemoaned traditional and cultural practices that fuel sexual violence against women and girls in the country.

“As a country, we have good laws on gender-based violence. Moreover, the courts are now offering stiffer

penalties on gender-based violence cases. Despite this, however, we have noted that GBV is still on an increase in the country.

“This is why we are here to reason with traditional leaders and community members to abandon traditions and cultural practices that fuel gender based violence,” she said.

On her part, AAM Programme Coordinator, Chimwemwe Gondwe, said the sensitizations in the target areas resulted from the findings of a 2017 rapid assessment conducted by AAM in partnership with Community Based Youth Organisation to ascertain if the current strategies and programmes being implemented in the

schools and communities are reducing cases of girls drop-out due to teenage pregnancies, early marriages and violence in and out of school.

“The rapid survey indicated that there is still a substantial number of girls who continue to drop out of school due to a lot of factors, including violence perpetuated by social norms which force girls into early marriages,” she said



WOJAM Vice Chairperson, Justice Ivy Kamanga, speaking to the press during the launch

COWHLA, Y+ bang heads on ART situation

As one way of contributing towards the attainment of the UN-AIDS' 90:90:90 targets enshrined in the country's national HIV and Aids National Strategic Plan, ActionAid Malawi (AAM) in August, this year, brought together National Association for Young People Living with HIV, COWHLA and Activista Malawi to share key issues affecting availability and accessibility of Anti Retroviral Therapy (ART) among People Living with HIV.

Speaking during the meeting that took place at Crossroads in Lilongwe, Fred Simwaka, from the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare hailed AAM for organizing the meeting. He said the ministry is ready to work with women and young women affected by HIV and Aids.

Tiwonge Gondwe, who represented COWHLA called upon women and girls living positively to speak out on the challenges they face when accessing medication in



From left: Fred Simwaka from Min of Gender, Violet Lindiwe, Chairperson of Y+, Tiwonge Gondwe, representing COWHLA and Chikumbutso Ngosi representing AAM at the function

various public facilities in the country. Emma Kaliya, who chair NGO-Gender Coordination Network (NGO-GCN) advised participants to champion evidence-based advocacy as one way of rendering credibility to a campaign for availability and accessibility of ART in public hospitals.

Chairperson of Young People Living with HIV and Aids in Malawi, Violet Lindiwe said the demands made during the meeting would inform the position paper to be presented to government later in the year.



Tiwonge Gondwe making a case on behalf of COWHLA during the meeting

AAM hands over K27m school infrastructure

ActionAid Malawi (AAM) on Friday, 27th July, handed over school infrastructure worth K27 million at Thondolo Primary School in Traditional Authority Thondolo, Lilongwe District. Constructed with funding from Irish partners, Susan Martin Legacy and Clonkeen College, the infrastructure include two school blocks, two teachers' houses and two toilets.

Speaking during the hand-over ceremony at the school, AAM Head of Fundraising and Communications, Mrs Tiwonge Kumwenda-Simkonda, said the organisation decided to construct the infrastructure as one way of promoting girls' education in the area.

"In 2017, we conducted a survey to see factors limiting girls' education in the area, and we found out that poor and inadequate infrastructure such as school blocks and toilets was one of the leading factors.

"So the construction of these infrastructures at this school are in line with one of ActionAid Malawi objectives which is girls' child education and empowerment. We hope that the infrastructure we are handing over today will lead to educated and empowered communities that will make meaningful contribution to development of the country," she said.

She said AAM will continue engaging partners to construct more infrastructure at the school as one way of contributing to conducive learning environment.

Mrs Kumwenda-Simkonda urged girls at the school to work hard in class to become productive citizens in future.

On his part, parliamentarian for the area, Willard Gwengwe, thanked AAM and its Irish partners for the projects at the school, saying the gesture has significantly complemented efforts by district development packages such as Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and District Development Fund (DDF).



Education havens: The two school blocks which were re-constructed by AAM



Violet Mbewe, a standard 7 learner at the school, thanking AAM and partners for the donation



We did for you: Mrs Kumwenda-Simkonda encouraging learners to to put education first

“Girls Conference key to girl-child education”

In an effort to inspire and motivate girls to stay in schools, ActionAid Malawi (AAM) under the Lilongwe Peri-Urban Programme in partnership with Lilongwe Urban Women Forum in August, 2018, hosted a Girls Conference that mobilised 39 girls from 13 primary schools with 13 female teachers.

The conference, conducted under the theme: “Empowered Girls, Empowered Future: Removing Barriers for Girls in Quality and Inclusive Education”, offered a platform for girls to interact with female professionals from AAM, Ministry of Defense and Judiciary. The conference articulated child rights, legal provisions, life skills and role modelling to motivate the girls to remain in school.

AAM Lilongwe Peri-Urban Programme Coordinator, Chimwemwe Gondwe, said the conference was organized to encourage girls to put education first despite the various challenges they are facing in their homes and communities.

“Lilongwe Peri-Urban schools have not been spared from increasing number of girls dropping out of school largely due to teenage pregnancies and coerced child marriages. Apart from sexual violence due to patriarchal norms and behaviours, most school environments force adolescent girls to drop out of school,” she said.

Speaking after the end of the three-day conference in Lilongwe, AAM Executive Director, Mrs. Grace Malera, said allowing young girls to interact with women professionals is key to motivating them to work hard in schools.

She observed that since the girls conference was initiated a few years ago, more girls have been transformed for the better.



A model, Lieutenant Esther Longwe (C) flanked by Bertha Mbewe Right and School matron from Liwela Primry School



AAM Executive Director, Mrs Grace Malera, addressing girls during the conference



AAM Executive Malera leading girls in taking 'oath' to complete their education

“We are glad that due to these conferences, coupled with social-economic initiatives, many girls have been rescued from early marriages. These platforms provide assertiveness to girls to self empowerment,” she said.

Committee calls for more resources to Education sector

Parliamentary Committee on Education has called upon the government to allocate more resources to the education to alleviate challenges facing the sector.

Vice Chairperson of Parliamentary Education Committee, Vincent Ghambi, made the remarks on 26th September in Lilongwe after the Committee toured Makunje Primary School in the district to appreciate the challenges in the education sector.

The tour, which was organized by ActionAid Malawi (AAM), enabled the Committee to inspect the school infrastructure and get stories from the learners, teachers, parents and community on the situation at the school.

Among the challenges noted include high teacher-pupil ratio, inadequate teachers' houses and inadequate learning space as the school has only two blocks, forcing other classes to learn under the trees.

Ghambi said the committee will keep engaging the government to increase resource allocation to the education sector, particularly primary school education.

AAM Acting Education and Youth Manager, Yandura Chipeta, said the organization organized the tour to enable parliamentarians get first-hand information on the challenges facing primary education in the country and influence increased budgetary allocation to the education in line with the UNESCO recommendation of 15-20 percent.

"We believe the challenges at this school speak for many schools in Malawi and we hope parliamentarians will influence government to invest more resources in the education sector to alleviate the challenges," she said.



Seeing is believing: Committee inspecting a classroom at Makunje Primary School



A learner at the school narrating the ordeal they go through to access education at the school



Yandura Chiipeta (Right) represented AAM Malawi during the tour

AAM, National TB Program organize information-sharing workshop

ActionAid Malawi-Joint TB/HIV Global Fund Programme in conjunction with the National TB Program organized a coordination meeting for stakeholders implementing community tuberculosis (TB) interventions.

The meeting was held on 24th August, 2018, at Blue Waters in Salima. The main purpose of the meeting was to promote information sharing regarding programming, strategies, challenges and best practices.

The meeting further created a forum for the participants to identify gaps and suggest how they can compliment each other on the ground. Some of the organizations that participated in the coordination meeting included Paradiso TB Patients Trust, Development Aid from People to People (DAPP), KCNV-Challenge TB, Riders for Health, MANASO and Facilitators of Community Transformation (FACT).

There were also representatives from the Department of Preventive Health Services and TB Zonal Managers.



AAM facilitates establishment of TB, HIV/AIDS leadership forum

ActionAid Malawi (AAM) in its capacity as the Principal Recipient for the non-biomedical component of the grant has facilitated formation of a Leadership Forum at a leadership meeting that was held on 21st August, 2018 at Blue Waters in Salima.

The forum has been established to increase governance and oversight of the Joint TB/HIV Grant.

The forum will also be responsible for setting strategic direction of the Joint TB HIV Global Fund Grant, supporting the programme's aim of reducing HIV and TB related morbidity in Malawi.

The will further enable partners share lessons and best practices, but also identify issues where a unified voice will pre-



AAM Executive Director, Mrs Grace Malera, addressing the participants during the meeting

sent the best results.

The Leadership forum is composed of Country Directors, National Directors and Executive

Directors of organisations serving as Sub Recipients and Sub-sub Recipients for the Joint TB/HIV Grant Programme.



Participants pose for a group photo after the leadership forum formation

Taking Oversight Role to Another Level: A Case of Mkanda Community in Malawi

It's not unusual to see communities in Malawi fold arms as governance and human rights issues take a turn for the worse. The culture of silence and unfounded fear for leadership have always been blamed for the rising docility among the citizenry.

But thanks to the social accountability project implemented by ActionAid Malawi (AAM) in Mchinji, communities are now unshackling themselves from the repressive culture of silence.

Trained in Food Security and Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) by AAM, communities in Mkanda in the district are now keeping duty bearers on their toes over governance and human rights issues.

One such community group trained in social accountability in the area is Mpazi Reflection Action Circle (RAC) which is part of the Social Accountability Monitoring (SAM) project that the NGO is carrying out in a number of areas in the country, together with its partners.

The SAM project's primary focus is on Food Security and Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) and the main objective is to enhance the capacity of the RACs to conduct oversight in the way government is carrying its development initiatives particularly how resources are being used in the two primary areas of focus.

Earlier this year, during the one of the discussions by Mpazi RAC, the communities felt something fishy at the construction project of a maternity ward by Paramount Holdings Limited at Mkanda health clinic.

The community suspected the super-

visor of the project of allegedly diverting some of the building materials to construct his own house in the same area.

"After investigating, we discovered that it was true that the supervisor was, indeed, diverting some of the building materials to build his own house, and that some of the workers hired by Paramount Holdings Limited



Mrs Kumwenda-Simkonda: We are impressed with community role

were also working at his house project," said Mr. Frank Chitedze, ADC Chairperson in the area.

Mr. Chitedze said his committee also visited the site where the supervisor Mr. Tony Dzanja, was building the house in question at Mpazi village.

According to Mr. Chitedze, people in the area are greatly concerned that the maternity ward will be of substandard state, to the disadvantage of the locals who have been travelling long distances to access services.

Mrs. Florence Sakala, a member of the community, says she is equally baffled by what is happening at Mkanda health clinic as far as the construction of the maternity ward was concerned.

"Authorities should step in and inves-

tigate this matter, otherwise we'll end having a substandard building," she said.

"As a woman, I know the importance of having a maternity ward closer to home."

Florence's bitter remarks were shared by Senior Chief Mkanda. "Certainly, this is not we want in our community, because we have suffered for long. Our women have been travelling long distance to the district hospital to access maternity services," he fumed.

Enita Nyika, a facilitator of Mpazi RAC, said they will push till authorities demonstrate accountability of the matter.

"We are even confused to that see that Paramount Holdings officials are not taking any action on the matter, despite being told. It's business as usual to them, despite everything we have told them," she said.

However, Paramount Holdings Limited Executive Director, Mr. Prakash Ghedia the company was aware of the matter and had since warned Dzanja against malpractice on the project.

Mr. Ghedia said they never dismissed Mr. Dzanja because he had acknowledged his wrong-doing and that he promised not to get involved in malpractice again.

"I want to assure everyone, including the community and government, that the maternity ward we are constructing at Mkanda clinic will not be affected in any way by these alleged misuses of resources," he said.

AAM Head of Fundraising and Communications said as an organization, they are satisfied with the work that Mkanda RAC is carrying out, as it is in line with their objective of conducting oversight in the use of public resources..

CHITIPA LRP makes K1.5 million school donation to primary schools



For better and quality education: Pangani (3rd from Right) symbolically handing over the desks

Chitipa Local Rights Programme handed over 60 desks worth MK1,5 million, 10 balls worth K325,000.00 to 10 primary schools, and 5400 exercise books worth K540,000.00 to sponsored and non-sponsored children in the area of TA Nthalire, Chitipa District.

Speaking during the hand over ceremony which took place at Kapelemera FP School in Nthalire, AAM Head of Programmes and Policy, Peter Pangani, said the desks will go a long way in improving quality education and learning condition of learners at the 3 Primary schools.

He asked the District Education Office through the District Council to continue where AAM start-

ed by considering other schools in the area. Receiving the

The 60 desks and 5 balls were procured with sponsorship funds while the other 5 balls were from NORAD funded project.

items on behalf of the District Council, Cllr Maxwel Kaira who is also the District Council Chairperson hailed AAM for considering the remotest school like Kapelemera with desks. He asked the school authorities to take care of the desks to im-

prove the learning conditions of pupils at the school. He challenged the council's education secretariat committee to emulate AAM work by coming up with ideas to address challenges in other school

A total 10 primary schools with a total of 1500 learners benefitted from the exercise books. The 60 desks and 5 balls were procured with sponsorship funds while the other 5 balls were from NORAD funded project.

Kapelemera FP is at a distance of 135 kilometre earth road from Chitipa Boma. It is one of the hard to reach areas in the district close to Nyika National Park.

Youth ring alarm bells on climate change

Youth with a stake in climate change interventions in the country have decried limited national and international space for the group in the climate change fight and have since called upon Malawi government and development partners to reverse the trend.

The youth have a call in a communique on the 2018 national youth conference that took place earlier this year in Lilongwe under theme: **Integrating Youth in Climate Change Negotiations, Sustainable Adaptation And Mitigation Actions**".

The youth— drawn from the various institutions in Malawi— say climate change poses a threat to right to food and nutrition security, hence the need for young people to be meaningfully involved to attain a Climate Resilient Malawi.

The youth call upon government to make special investments in education and training for youth in agriculture in formal and informal education systems; particularly the Value market chain including seed grants to support youth beyond their training.

"Government should make deliberate efforts to communicate to young women and youth about gender equality to bridge the knowledge gap on climate change issues while empowering marginalized groups in culturally appropriate ways. Youth



Wales Chigwenembe (left, front row) addressing members of the media on the issues in the communique during the press briefing at ActionAid Malawi office

will be engaged in the design and communication of Climate Change," partly reads the Communique which is co-signed by Wales Chigwenembe, Technical Committee Chairperson of ACTIVISTA Youth Network.

Other signatories to the communique include; Mathew Picard from Care Malawi, Lisa Banda from the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources and Ezilon Kasoka, National Coordinator for National Youth Network on Climate Change (NYNCC).

The youth further call upon government to ensure youth representations in all the meetings as regards to policy formulation, implementation and negotiations.

"Particularly the Malawi delegation to any Climate Negotiation events in a year should have a

youth representation to build capacity for sustainability.

Development partners should consider funding youth delegates to the UNFCCC negotiations and other climate meetings and trainings in the region and at international level," reads the communique.

"Government should effectively engage existing youth networks in policy implementation and tracking of progress of strategies, plans and budgets.

"Such platforms should be recognized in Policy implementation plans and incorporated in National, District and Local structures. Such youth networks and organizations must not be limited to government initiated platforms only."

AAM aids COWFA participation at MAAFAS



Putting the message across: COWFA members supported by AAM march a head of the MAAFAS function

In September, ActionAid Malawi supported 30 farmers from Coalition of Women Farmers (COWFA) to participate at this year's Malawi Forum for Agricultural and Advisory Services (MAFAS) conference that run from 18th to 19th September.

Held under the theme: "Enabling agricultural extension and advisory services for agricultural transformation and growth," the conference offered farmers a platform to commemorate their successes, raise their demands, share challenges and advocate for their rightful position and support in agricultural development.

The conference started with a match along some streets of Lilongwe.



Loud and clear: Marchers, that included COWFA members displaying placards above and below



General Assembly impressed with AAM' Machinga interventions

ActionAid Malawi (AAM) General Assembly (GA) says it is impressed with the organisation's interventions in Machinga District. The members made the remarks after touring various interventions the organization is implementing in the district.

Among stakeholders the members interacted with during the visit included learners council at Mlomba Primary School under 'Safe Schools' project, care-givers and management committee at Community Based Child Care Centre (CBCC) Model Centre at Mwangata under Early Childhood Development (ECD) project.

The GA members also visited Makogolo Resources Centre at Ngokwe where they interacted with AAM's six partners supported by Machinga Local Rights Programme through Sponsorship Programme. The partners included Makogolo, Chiuta, Chitundu, Mayera and Tukumulane Community Based Organisations (CBOs). Finally, the members interacted with Machinga Women Forum to appreciate the group's interventions aimed at economically empowering women and girls in the district.

Speaking on behalf of fellow GA members, Lilian Kufase Nyadindi Kumwenda, said she was impressed with the AAM interventions in district.

"As General Assembly members, we decided to tour interventions as part of our oversight role at the organization. Honestly, we are pleased with ActionAid Malawi work in Machinga. It is encouraging that the organization is working with the most excluded people to reduce poverty and social injustice. What is key now is to ensure that these interventions are sustained beyond ActionAid Malawi existence in the district," she said.

Mrs. Kumwenda called upon the beneficiaries to intensify resource mobilization drive to ensure that their interventions reach out to more people.

AAM started its implementation in Machinga in 2005 in five thematic areas namely, womens rights, education and youth, HIV and Aids, Governance, and Climate Change and Resilience building.



General Assembly members interacting with committee at a Satellite Mwayi CBCC built by AAM



General Assembly Member Lilian Kufase Dindi Kumwenda dance with care-givers at Mwayi CBCC after the interaction



Ngokwe community members sharing their success stories to GA members through drama

Report tips AAM on performance

The ActionAid Malawi (AAM) management review which got released in the last quarter has called upon the institution to further improve on its good work to remain an influential organization in social injustice and poverty eradication in the country.

The review exercise—took place from 24th February to March 3rd 2018—was carried out by a cross-functional team made up by ActionAid International senior management team from 4 peer countries, namely, Burundi, Uganda, Gambia, Zimbabwe and Rwanda to help review all areas that are critical to ensuring the Affiliate's financial suitability and optimal delivery of its mission work.

“The review team’s overall impression about ActionAid Malawi Affiliate is good. Despite some internal processes and people management challenges, ActionAid Malawi is still considered one of the big and respected civil society organisations in Malawi,” reads the report in part.

“The critical challenge for Country Leadership Team now is to offer more inspirational leadership to the rest of the staff to consolidate past gains and make greater improvements in critical risk areas to get AA Malawi back to the glorious past.”

On governance and leadership, the report notes that the board is strong, aware of its responsibility and alert to challenges facing AAM.

“Board members expressed their satisfaction about improved relationship with management and quality of information they receive that enables them to make in-



Have their work cut-out: AAM staff during one of their staff meetings

formed decisions. Management also recognises a critical role played by the Board and the latter’s active involvement in managing current challenges, and acknowledges existence of a mutually accountable and supportive relationship between the two parties,” notes the report.

However the report expresses need for improved mechanism of induction, coaching and continuous development for board and assembly members to facilitate their continuous learning, experiences sharing and upgrading of their knowledge and skills to enable them to effectively carry out their role.

The report further urges AAM management to tackle challenges in areas of culture, systems and policies, financial sustainability and contract management .

In conclusion, the report offers three categories of recommendations to AAM management for implementation. The recommendations are in high, medium and low medium categories.

Among the high priority recom-

mendations include; improving contract management and cost recovery from projects through aggressive negotiation with donors and proposal submission and ensure consistent, accurate and timely charge-outs to projects to ensure approved costs are fully recovered.

Among the medium priority recommendations, the report calls upon AAM to revise and strengthen AAM partnership policy and practice as part of the new CSP development to clearly define mandate, responsibilities and accountabilities in partnerships as well as tools and mutual accountability systems that enhance rights-based partnership practice at all levels.

On low priority recommendations the report asks AAM to strengthen visibility and understanding of ActionAid Malawi’s work and continuously clarify AA Malawi’s operational mandate and rationales for geographical footprint to communities and other stakeholders in order to manage their demands or expectations of country growth into new operational areas.