

# joycebanda

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## SPEAKERS

Russ White, Joyce Banda, Michael Wahman

- R** Russ White 00:00  
This is MSU today. Here's Russ white. Well, it's a pleasure to welcome MSU, Assistant Professor of Political Science and core faculty in the African Studies Center, Michael Wahman to MSU. Today, Michael, great to see you.
- M** Michael Wahman 00:16  
Thank you so much, Russell, and thank you for inviting me.
- R** Russ White 00:18  
This is exciting. We're going to hear your conversation with former Malawi president, Dr. Joyce Banda here in a minute. But before we get to that, let's set the scene a little bit in general, describe what your research interests are.
- M** Michael Wahman 00:32  
Yeah, so my research is focusing on African democracy more broadly. And I'm particularly interested in issues related to elections and how you arrange free fair and credible elections on the African continent. I've studied Malawi for many years. And actually, I've observed several Malawi in elections, including the one where Joyce Banda stood for re election in 2014.



Russ White 01:01

So now talk about this particular research project that is going to lead into this conversation with Dr. Banda.



Michael Wahman 01:08

Yes. So I've had a conversation with Dr. Banda for a few weeks now. We here at MSU, we started a new research project that has to do with female parliamentary behavior. So what we know around the world is that it's not only the case that women are represented in Parliament to a lesser extent than men. But when they come into parliament, they also seem to be sidelined. And there are many ways in which we could measure this one of the clearest metrics in which we can see this is the extent to which they they participate in debates, and there are many obstacles to doing so. And this is true across the world. It's also true in Malawi. So we started a new research project where we wanted to see how does a female president inspire other elite women, for instance, members of parliament? And can we see that when a woman becomes precedent, we see a changes in parliamentary behavior among among female MPs. And this isn't people we saw. So we coded hundreds of 1000s of speeches in the Malawi Parliament using machine learning. And we looked particularly in at the periods 2009 to 2014. in Malawi. In the two first two and a half first years of that period, we had a male president who died in office, and then Banda became the president in the last two and a half years. And what we saw was that there was a significant increase in the number of speeches held by female MPs. And also we saw a change in the sort of things that they talked about. So it took more on the sort of issues that has normally been associated with kind of males fares, particularly the the economy. So this really, we argue, shows the symbolic power of a female president such as Joyce bond.



Russ White 03:05

So Michael, tell us a little bit more about President, Dr. Joyce Banda, and then how you got connected with her for this conversation we're about to hear.



Michael Wahman 03:14

So Dr. Banda is one of the seminal leaders on the African continent. She was the president of Malawi between 2012 and 2014. And she was the second ever female president on the African continent. The first one was Ellen Sirleaf Johnson in Liberia. Prior to becoming the president, she had been the Vice President and Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Minister of women, child welfare and community services, and she had also been a

member of parliament. The thing that is important to know about President Banda is that she came into power under very peculiar circumstances. She was never elected to become the president. She became the president because the former president died in office, and she took over power in a in a very difficult point in time for Malawi, Malawi was in a deep economic recession. They've been some serious human rights abuses in the period before her, but she came in and was a formidable force in Malawi as the president for two years. She was ranked as one of the most powerful women in the world by Forbes, Forbes magazine in 2012 13 and 14 and beyond that, she's also distinguished himself as a leading activist, and philanthropist. She's the founder of the Joyce Banda foundation and she's been working very hard on issues that has to do with women's physical and economic rights and continues to do so. My own involvement with Dr. Vander keen in relation to this article that was published in the in the American Political Science review, and she was fascinated by these results and was intrigued In this conversation, so that's the background to this this interview.

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Russ White 05:03

Well, Michael, thank you so much. And again, this is MSU. Today in cooperation with democracy in Africa. Here's MSU, Professor Michael Wahman. and former president of Malawi, Dr. Joyce Banda.

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Michael Wahman 05:17

Your Excellency, Dr. Joyce Banda, it's such a tremendous honor to have you with us today. I followed your extraordinary career for many years. And I remain fascinated with the legacy that you have in Malawi, and in politics across the African continent. We were hoping that this conversation would revolve particularly around the theme of female political role models. And obviously, there are a few people in the world who are better equipped to talk on this issue. You came into public office in a time where there were relatively few women in public service in Malawi and across the world. And you rose to become the second ever female president on the African continent. So Your Excellency, at this point, being out of elected office? To what extent do you think that you still have an important role to fill in being a role model for younger women entering into public service in Malawi and elsewhere?

J

Joyce Banda 06:17

Yeah, I think for me to understand that I didn't set out to be a leader, a political leader, I knew very young, well, around eight years old, and alcove mine was talking to my father, my father, but I see something special in this child. And this child shall be great. And at a

time when nobody would even imagine that he might I would ever have a female president, this is 1958. So they planted a seed. And whatever I was going to do that was special. I didn't know but ever so often, my father would remind me about the fact that what my uncle had said, that is number one. Number two, all the issues I have championed in my life originated from personal experience. When I was growing up in my village, against all odds, my father fought with my grandmother to take me out of that village to go and live in town where he lived. In order to send me to school again, his tradition, my grandmother was supposed to bring me up, I left behind a good friend of mine by the name of Chris, Chris was brighter than me, she went to the village school, we went all the way to end of primary school, were both selected to the best girl similar schools in Malawi, she went one time and couldn't go back, because the family could not raise the \$6 that she should need to go back to school. So at age 14, I realize that this world is unfair. And I saw I saw I made up my mind at that age, that I would grow up and send as many girls as possible to school. In 1984, I went to give birth to my firstborn child, and serve on what they call or support was smarter, partum hemorrhage and was bleeding to death. It is the highest cause of death for pregnant women, in Malawi and Africa. At that time, 1200 women were dying, giving birth. And when I was saved, but one of my one of only three doctors in my country. At that time, I made up my mind that I would fight maternal mortality, because it's not fair. It's not right. It is not right. Because in in America, somebody is pregnant, it's the time of expectation and joy, and they prepare for nothing else, but a baby. In Africa. We don't know when whether we go come back. It is that injustice that a woman should die giving life when it can be avoided. That became one of my fights. For as long as I live, I shall refuse to accept that a woman will die giving life. I spent my 1971 1981 in an abusive marriage. By age 26, I had three children. And I tolerated all that abuse. In 1981. I packed my bags and left and made up my mind that as long as I leave, I shall fight the injustice, the gender based violence. And I discovered very quickly that economic empowerment is key for social and political empowerment. So I drew my first mission statement in 1981. When I left that marriage, that I've spent my life assisting women, youth and girls, gain social and political empowerment through business and education. So my my ascending to leadership, it is that work. that propelled me into leadership. It is the women that I worked with at grassroot. For me, it has been about supporting vulnerable people deserve Vantage men and women and girls to live a better life, that grassroot and it is those that he pushed me for into elected office. But now I rank very quickly. Two things. That number one, leadership is a love affair. You must fall in love with the people yourself, and the people must fall in love with you. And so I made up my mind that I was going to listen to what the people say that I love and that love me back. When you love those people, that yourself, you will not want anybody to exploit the street or to abuse them, you will fight for justice for on their behalf forever. So when they said go to Parliament, and change those laws that negatively impact on us. I saw that as a great opportunity. So in 2004, let I was 54. I stood for election to go to Parliament. And I go to

Parliament and was fortunate to be appointed Minister of women and women and children, and so straightaway dusted up a bill that had been a draft bill that had been sitting on the shelf for seven years and champion the passing of the domestic violence. That's the first time Malawians although I had done a lot of work in the civil society, economically empowering women. But this was the law that changed the perception of Malawians on judgment to 1010 days. So editor, whether she was female or male, and this was going to help later on, as I ascended into office, so then became blind.

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Michael Wahman 11:42

So Dr. Banda, I would like to ask you a little bit more about this, because I think your story is one that is very relatable to many Malawian women and women around the world, you faced a lot of the same obstacles as many of your voters, whether that be gender based violence, access to education, access to quality health care. But of course, going from that activist role. Entering in to politics can often be a challenge. And when you were elected to Parliament, there weren't many women in, in, in the Malawi parliament. How was your first interaction with national level politics? And did you feel that the institutions were ready to take your own in that in that position?

J

Joyce Banda 12:28

Yeah, I think what happened is initially working at grassroot, I started an organization called the National Association of Business women in 1989. And I shall forever be grateful to the American government that supported me and provided resources for me to do that work. So for between 1989 to 1997, we had reached 50,000 women, and provided microfinance and training and economic empowerment is power when for rural women. So by the time I went to politics, I had him a critical mass of people that supported me that he trusted me because you have to earn people's respect and trust, particularly at the grassroot level. And in my case, they knew that I was a volunteer wasn't doing anything to be paid. So it is that, that that helped me. So I, it is difficult for me to say what other people went through. It is for me to look at how this critical mass of supporters, this network of women across the country, that is what should it be, and even families, in the beginning, men were resentful, because when women became powerful, because through economic empowerment, the first person they talked about was Jewish man like this, because of George Panda, you had this but then so we incorporated in our training, a steps that women must take, make sure that they don't intimidate their husbands in a patriarchal society such as ours. So he I can say that what the world doesn't know is that African women were leaders of their nations before colonization. In fact, it is colonization that degrade them. And the some people have written to say it is because those that colonized us, some of them did not have in their systems in the integration of women in

leadership. So they didn't know what to do with the women. But what happened in the 50s as our brothers rose to fight for several women stood to the occasion the Winnie Mandela has lost you onboard women that you hear in Africa, that rose and joined their brother, across the continent to fight. So one thing that I think the world doesn't know is that Africa is one place where psychological men have seen women V. And although there's patriarchy, that is one area where that is why, right now we have female president number six, on the continent of Africa, I know some parts of the world, they're still struggling to get one. I was amazed the other day one country got a vice president for the first time after 200 years of democracy, and were rejoicing. And I said, Oh, we have one doesn't have a vice president on our continent. So with that is one thing that I can say, the country with the highest number of women in Parliament is on the continent of Africa, and the President after President appointing 60% of their cabinet, women.

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Michael Wahman 15:42

And I think that this is a key point and something that isn't stressed enough, right. And I think that also, that there are many similarities between a country like Malawi and a country like America or European countries in some of the obstacles that women are facing in, in government. One of the things that I think it was interesting, they were talking about aggressiveness and sort of gendered expectations. Something that we found in our own research here at MSU, was that when women enter into Parliament's in Malawi, we see that they tend to be slightly sidelined within that institution, they tend to speak less in Parliament and less they tend to access parliamentary leadership to a lesser extent than their male colleagues. Why do you think this is? And obviously this is not unique to Malawi, this is what we've seen elsewhere, too.

J

Joyce Banda 16:39

Yeah, when I was president, we were we were we were seven women. We had seven women in Parliament. And then we moved to 11. And through the support the kind of support of donors who provided financial resources to women, because economic empowerment is key to social and political empowerment, as I said earlier, so when women don't have resources, they can't, they can't organize a workshop for chiefs or youth, to tell them what they what they stand for. They lose elections, not because they wouldn't make good leaders, but because they don't have the resources. So we engage donors, and the donors helped provide resources to all female candidates. And we went from 11 to 27. And I think this was the 22,004. And then 2009, we went from 2745 women and the saw, so that that that has been the trend, but it's difficult for women to compete on equal ground. It is not because the people don't want to vote for them. But they don't get to hear them during the campaign, because they cannot afford the resources to fight.

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Michael Wahman 17:51

And so the 50/50 campaign that you're you're speaking about, of course, it's been a prominent part of Malawian politics for several elections. And there's been a lot of discussion about their effectiveness. But it's not only about getting women elected, right. It's also about at the point that they are elected, are they empowered within the parliamentary institutions so that they can actually speak for women when they're in Parliament. And something that we we found in our research was that there was a great divide gender divide in speaking down time in the Malawian parliament, but actually, when you became president, we saw a great increase in the number of speeches made by women MPs,

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Joyce Banda 18:35

do you be pleased to hear that? Our our, our speaker now is a woman?

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Michael Wahman 18:40

I know, I know this. So obviously, Malawian women have made a big have improved their position within parliament to a large extent. But do you think that you being the first female president in Malawi, can have had an inspirational effect on other women at that elite level?

J

Joyce Banda 19:03

Yeah. What do you see during research and the actual situation sometimes can be different? Malawi and women have not shied away because I want you to remember that the gender the domestic violence bill I'm talking about when we passed it through Parliament. It is at that time when we had only 27 women in Parliament against 193. So there must be something we did, right. Because that was that bill was emotive, I mean, we didn't even know it would ever pass. But we use the strategies and we loaded and we worked hard as only 27 women. So 27 women didn't shy away when the seven women took the walk. They're divorced by the by the one and made sure that we win that we pass that deal in Parliament, including engaging the public and awareness and, and, and and we organize the marches. And we a highlighted violent act of men upon women, a man, a man who chopped off both the arms of his wife, a man who scooped out and I have his wife, a man who was aborting his women, his wife so that they shouldn't have for children to use crude, crude tools. That, allegedly, the whole public and by the time when we went into parliament to pass that law, the whole public was on our side.

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Michael Wahman 20:33

Nevertheless, there is spin on that, at the time where you you became president, and I would like to skip to this episode, which I think is an important one. I mean, you rose very much to the presidency, under very peculiar circumstances. And I don't think that this has been emphasized enough. You were, you were given a very hard hand dealt to you when you became the president. Malawi was in economic freefall. You had democratic erosion, just the year before you've had massive demonstrations with great government repression. You the government had fallen out with the donor community. And you rose into power without the majority in parliament, and being the first female president, in that sort of situation? How do you shore up power? And how do you make sure to get the the political majorities that you need in order to have a progressive agenda?

J

Joyce Banda 21:42

I think one or two or three things that have not featured in, in your findings, is the fact that by the time I took office, the day I went into office, it was after 72 hours of struggling with the government officials and ministers to allow me to take off. There was that resistance from the ruling party because I had fallen out with my president. I was vice president constitutionally, but they had already started maneuvering to ensure that the President D one telega does not rule me to take over from him. At that point, I already had an assassination attempt. So by the time the President passed on, I was the now prepared to take over but the they in government were not prepared to open space to allow me to take off. So for 72 hours, I was under siege, thanks to the general, the army general who the armed forces in Malawi, they always stand with the people if you if you research about the election, the nullification and the election of last year. It is also the armed forces in 19 9092, with Dr. bandas, the dictator for 30 years for things to begin to change. It was the armed forces that stood up and stood with the people. So if we're in my three days, the armed forces, the Army General stood up and open space for me to take off. So I took on a day, the very first day I became president, there was no fuel for a day. in Malawi, there was no food for 2 million people in Malawi, there was no electricity in Malawi, the economy had only grown by 2%. In addition to all the issues you highlighted, that is the first day I take off, even if you were to take me to my president's funeral was donated by the country, the president of Zambia. So it wasn't easy to it was difficult. But he one thing about female leaders, and I think you should watch that turns on you and President that what she's doing one thing that is characteristic of female leaders, female leaders get into leadership, and they are decisive. And they are brave. And they take risks. And they want to do just what is right, regardless of what what risk it is, or regardless of what the potential backlash that you might get. But as I said earlier, if you fell in love with the people, you'd say, you don't care. What you know, is that you should do things right.

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Michael Wahman 24:26

So in 2012, or shortly after your ascent to power, one of the MPs in the Malawi parliament, Jean Kalyani, Kalyani said this in the in Parliament, she said that the question is no longer whether a woman can be President of our country or not, but rather what she can deliver. Malawi must get more and more women in decision making positions. What do you think that this particular moment and particularly given The heart backline and all the obstacles that you had to face coming into power. How do you think that this changed the perception of female leadership in Malawi?

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Joyce Banda 25:11

What do you need to do is to come now and find out. I didn't know that already to see what I'm seeing now, because people have come to us to understand what we were able to achieve. In that short period, when I finished the term of Dr. pinworm, tariqa. This country had no fewer when I came in, when I left, we had reserves for two weeks and even build reservoirs. When I came in, there was no electricity. By the time I left, we had added 64 megawatts to the grid. When I came in, there was no food for 2 million people when I left, we are the 1.9 million metric tons over production. When I came in companies were operating at 35%, because there was no foreign exchange to import, but raw materials. When I left companies were operating at 85%. And recruiting people. When I came into the economy had grown by 2%. When I left the economy had achieved 6.3%. When I came in 675, women were dying, giving birth, when I left, we had reduced that by 32%. And the African Union gave us an award for achievement. So it is Oracle that everybody can see. But when a woman is his president, when a woman is a leader, she wants to do so much abuse and propaganda. Unfortunately, women have not only Africa, but of the world. We don't have the capacity to protect ourselves, or to lie or to fight, we are just concentrating on doing things right and doing the job. So make sure that at the end of the day, you can perception matters in politics. So people see what they read, and they don't see you fight back. And they can take that as truth. But it for me, I married one of the finest lawyers in this country, my husband was Chief Justice of the first Malawian Attorney General as well. So he told me, as long as you don't do anything wrong, anybody can smear anything on you. At the end of the day, nobody shall ever touch you because it's about evidence. But if you feel deeply that you need to take action on corrupt leaders, and officials, go ahead. So now it's 15 years, if the six years of our independence, no president has arrested 72 people at once except us. And that, for me is my greatest achievement. The second achievement that we must take note is the fact that I'm one leader who appointed fellow women to positions of leadership for the first time, head of civil service was a woman one row in Chief Justice of Malawi. anastasiya, Sosa was a woman, Solicitor General, head of Law Society, a low commission, head of Human Rights Commission, Deputy Inspector General for these two deputy governors received back

eight district commissioners 100 appointments of women, these are things that never get recorded.

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Michael Wahman 28:22

So because this is also both in in the research on female leaders, and also in some of the discussion about your, your, your presidency, you're pointing to some key key appointments that you made of fellow women. But some have also questioned why there weren't more women in cabinet. So there were six female ministers in your cabinet out of 22 members, which was not a dramatic increase after the reshuffle that you did in 2012. And what we've seen around the world is that actually, women have not been particularly better than men in in appointing female cabinet ministers famously, for instance, Margaret Thatcher didn't have a single woman in her cabinet.

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Joyce Banda 29:10

It's a minute to minute women did President Trump have and how many women in your own Parliament? Yes, that's, that's that's,

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Michael Wahman 29:22

I would agree with you on all these points. Right.

J

Joyce Banda 29:25

What do you need to understand is that that must not be an accusation towards women leaders are born. It must be that you people who are experts, who are immersed, oppressed, understand the situation in which one finds himself or herself. In my case, as I've told you, it was a precarious period. For me, going into government when the people who should actually mean to government are not willing to allow me to take off. So I'm getting into government because the whole country is on my side. In fact, the I took us at six o'clock in the evening, the rural people had gathered at Parliament and threatened that if your Spanner doesn't take off today we are burning down parliament. But it is now here that this upper class that are struggling to accept that a woman can take both. So when I put in, I decided that I was going to do things differently. For me, as you rightly pointed out to the situation that I found our our relations with the donors, people were actually refusing to mourn in the president because of what he had the way he treated them towards the end of his life. So my position was the announcement that I made. I said, the three things I said, number one, we shall mourn our president like a king. Number two, we shall bring everybody together, there shall be no retribution, we should all hold hands

and move forward as a nation, in order to demonstrate that I had to pick up people from other parties to form my cabinet. So my cabinet did not come from my party. So I had to bring MCP, I had to bring a Ford, I had to bring People's Party. And I had to bring in DPP, the same people that were saying I shouldn't get to me, so that I am seen very concerning the nation in that respect. In those other parties, they didn't have women. So in my party, I took six women. So I had to do what I could do to move forward. So yes, you can want to have in Malawi, it's not like other parts of the UK, other democracies, I don't know what happens in America. But you'll find that in other cabinets, members of parliament are members of parliament. And when you come to choose your cabinet, you can choose professionals from outside, not here. in Malawi, you peek, seven members of parliament must form your cabinet. So we've been in the same parliament, you pick your cabinet. So when I was picking these to form this integrated group I had to pick from. So if the party has no woman, but I must address the issues of reconciliation, I took men from there. So I did it. And I compensated that by making a lot of female appointments outside cabinet, because that was necessary for me. And it was easier for me to do.

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Michael Wahman 32:26

And indeed, this is something that many people have spoken about in terms of the very delicate operation of creating coalitions, right, in African politics, which is key, you need to have people in cabinet with the right sorts of resources and the right sort of regional appeal, for instance, in order to build a broad coalition that can govern successfully and also win elections down the road. Right. And this seems like this could be even one. One further obstacle for women in in, in taking the next step, not only being in Parliament, but taking the step to the to the front row and into cabinet. Again, resources matter, right.

J

Joyce Banda 33:11

Yeah, that is true. You are right.

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Michael Wahman 33:16

So something that some of some of your critics have talked about in relation to the 2014 election, they've been looking particularly at female MPs and their their electoral success in the 2014 election. But 2014 election was the first election where actually women representation went down in every other election, we've seen a positive trend in Malawi. And some of your critics have suggested that this is connected to your presidency and a reflection on on female leadership. And you as a precedent, do you find any truth in this this argument? Or do you look at it in a different way?

J

Joyce Banda 34:02

Yeah, you have to make that judgment. Because I told you the situation that I found Malawi and what my success was, but I also want you to remember that when you go to for parameter elections, people come from different parties, so different parties will support their candidates in our particular case. Yes, the number went down. But the thing to remember is the 2014 election cannot reflect a true election in Milan. The meeting that took place in Milan, the topics that was used to correct tally sheets, the stealing of the election, affected women more so most of the women you think last delegation did not lose their election. But then even my election, everybody knew that it was being stolen. And I made an announcement to the nation, perhaps we should notify the elections, because the mind extra permission in mind had announced that there had been fraud, and that there was going to be a recount. But then they went and burned down in the warehouse that was warning the ballot papers. So I made an announcement to the nation, let us have a rerun. And when we have a rerun, I will not stand so that I don't show as if I have some vested interest. But let us give Malawians a chance to choose a leader of their choice. I did not even fight, I did not even have the means to go to court. And that is why I just considered and left in 2014, the evidence of the rigging was identical. I mean, 2019, the evidence was identical. And that is why I and others got together to say not again, this cannot be repeated, because innocent women who are losing their elections because they can't read, then who are not even capable to become members of parliament were getting to be members of parliament. So we got together nine parties and went to court and challenge the election. And the the elections were notified. So what you should remember is, the 2014 election, cannot be an election that can be looked at, and any judgment made against what happened that year, because most of the women did not lose the election, including myself.

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Michael Wahman 36:26

Yes. And, of course, I was myself on the ground in 2014. I studied the election very closely. And I will agree with you that there are many controversies about that election, and they were not seriously dealt with because there wasn't, there wasn't a petition in the same way as in the 2019 election,

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Joyce Banda 36:45

you know, women can't afford I couldn't afford the kind of resources that you require to challenge the election in court. But then when we saw that, the same evidence when we went to court this time, and because it was men all together, I was the only woman out of the nine parties, they were able to put together resources and to fight in court and win the case and get various that results modified and have a rerun and win by 56%.

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Michael Wahman 37:15

And some would say well, that's the appropriate way to do it. Right, that there's no there's no constitutional mandate for a precedent to nullify an election if an election should be nullified, that will have to be by the constitutional courts. Right?

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Joyce Banda 37:29

That is what I was asking. I was asking us to go to court so that the results are nullified. And and I said, if we get that to happen, I shall not stand for election. Because I don't want to be seen, but I would have pushed for nullification because of vested interest. But again last year, when did 2020 that's exactly when it went to 19. That's exactly what will be the people, the best people with a vested interest decided, let's get together. Let's go to court, let's change the election, under the elections will nullify the results.

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Michael Wahman 38:03

So Your Excellency I would like to talk a little bit about your your legacy. So you you rightly pointed out that Malawi now has its first Female Speaker we saw in 2019, a higher share of female parliamentarians being elected than before. We've had subsequent campaigns on trying to increase female political representation. You talked earlier about many of the much of the misogyny, much of the sexist attacks that you had to endure during your time in US precedents. But do you believe that your period in office, although of course, not every Malawian will, will agree with everything you did. You were at least a very strong leader and a leader that had a great impact in those two years. Do you think that this period of time might have opened up new windows for other women to advance to the same level?

J

Joyce Banda 39:05

When you come here, even if you if you ask a 10 year old? What do you want to become when you grow up? Who is your role model without fail? Don't mention to expand? I left office in 2014. And in 2018, there was a survey conducted here, I can send you a copy of that. And that that research. That survey revealed that Joyce Banda was the most most trusted leader. So I will send you that information because it was in the newspapers as well. So there has been, I think time tells when now they can see how I implemented big projects. But mostly I also paid a lot of attention rural social programs that were proposed. And secondly, the fact that I paid attention to ensure that women Participating in positions of leadership than ever before. And all those I mentioned earlier. In fact, in

diplomatic service, it was 5%. So all those are not in office now. So we can talk about that percentage anymore.

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Michael Wahman 40:15

So last year, you mentioned yourself the new Tanzanian precedent, precedent. Samia, Sulu, Hassan, she became the first female president of Tanzania. And it's striking how similar the circumstances are in relation to the way that you came to power. And have you had the opportunity to talk to the Tanzanian president? And if so, what kind of advice Did you give her?

J

Joyce Banda 40:43

Um, I believe that it is unethical for you, as a former leader, to tell another leader how to do things or what to do. Even now in Malwai, as I've told you, that I'm on the advisory committee with the president, when I'm very, very careful how I how I move in providing suggestions, because I don't want my president to think that I'm embedding his territory, because you have been a president already, you have to move cautiously. So what we have done is as in as far as the Tanzanian President is concerned, we have in Africa, what we call the African women leaders network. And that network is an African Union network and you and women, I am on the steering committee, and you saw the five former presidents the five presidents in Africa you know, we are bad five, she's number six. So Ellen, Sharif Joyce Banda, Catherine pan's on Central Africa, Republic, mina 5g in Mauritius, and the now the president of Ethiopia. We are all members of the steering committee of the African leaders. So what we have done, Ellen Sirleaf is our patron, we have written a joint letter to her congratulating her, and we are looking forward to an opportunity when all of us can meet together. But no, I cannot indulge in telling her advice or telling her what to do. And to be honest with you, she is a fantastic woman, she is outstanding. She has surprised the world because she comes across as somebody who is very calm. But she is a very strong woman. So I don't think she needs anybody's advisor. But she needs a network of women support her to make her feel that she's not alone. And that we are planning to have a joint meet in meeting of all the five of us and ourselves just to Britain.

M

Michael Wahman 42:45

That's fantastic. Madam President, it's been an absolute honor to talk to you today. I think we've all learned a lot from this, this discussion about the importance of the female political role models, and also how hard some of the governing parts can be and how the particular motive of trying to advance female leadership sometimes have other

obstacles that you have to take into account as well to be an effective leader.

J

Joyce Banda 43:15

So I was thinking that it would be bad for me to leave this, this this interview, without making clear to my fellow women, that it is not easy to become a to be a woman either. I have had two assassination attempts in one of them by security man was hacked to death. But what I want all African women lead women to know is that we can't stop. We must keep moving together. And those of us who are this age must provide support to the younger women. Because Statehouse, we must match to whether anybody likes it or not. And for that to happen, we cannot shy away with a lot of fear. We cannot get discouraged because judgment was almost killed. No. Or this other one in in in country X was stripped naked. No. Or this other one in country X was beaten? No, because all of those things are happening. But we have decided that we shall push all those aside, hold hands form networks support one another. This symbol African African women leaders network at African Union has two layers. One is my age. The next one is a younger age with their own strong committee intergenerational and we provide support to one another we have agreed that we are morally obliged to provide support to the younger women. So we cannot shy away we cannot fear we cannot even fear a smear campaign. Yes, abuse is there. The media. Yes. tortures us castigate us do anything to make sure that you we don't operate smear campaigns that can send you here But what I have gone through myself, my husband has taught me, and I'm telling fellow women, as long as you are right, and you are honest, and you're serving your people with integrity, and you're accountable and transparent, nothing will happen to you. So we must hold hands and move together into the future with hope. And we must get to the polyester formulating tables, and our African brothers understand that women are the majority. And the last time I checked, we bring the other half into this world, so we cannot be ignored. They must open space at the table for us to sit at the policy, formulating tables, and participate in in leadership on the continent of Africa.

M

Michael Wahman 45:43

Madam President, thank you so much.

J

Joyce Banda 45:48

Thank you very much indeed.

M

Michael Wahman 45:50

☺  
All right. Thank you. Russell, you got all of that? Right.

**R** Russ White 45:53  
Wow, that was fantastic. What an honor to sit in on that. You're an inspiration.

**J** Joyce Banda 45:59  
Thank you.

**R** Russ White 46:00  
Yes it was great.

**M** Michael Wahman 46:02  
Yes, Madam President. It's been a great honor. I really hope that this is not the last time we meet. I hope we can. We can invite you to MSU at some point, or maybe I will get the chance to see you and in Malawi at some point.

**J** Joyce Banda 46:16  
Thank you. Thank you very much indeed.