PRESS RELEASE

President Arthur Peter Mutharika of The Republic of Malawi appointed Peace Parks Foundation patron

Patronage strengthens regional cooperation for long-term transboundary landscape stewardship and biodiversity conservation

Stellenbosch, South Africa and Lilongwe, Malawi, 26 February 2026

Peace Parks Foundation is pleased to announce the appointment of His Excellency Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi, as patron.

The appointment reflects a shared commitment to the long-term stewardship of southern Africa's transboundary landscapes, where healthy ecosystems and the communities who depend on them are intrinsically connected.

In recent years, Malawi has strengthened the management of protected areas, including through the Nyika–Vwaza Co-Management Trust (a special purpose vehicle, or SPV), where government, communities, other key stakeholders and Peace Parks share responsibility for sustainable natural resource management and development.

In accepting the invitation, President Mutharika reaffirmed his commitment to regional cooperation and environmental stewardship. "The Foundation's commendable work for conservation, alongside the communities who depend on these regions, is truly inspiring," President Mutharika said. "I am deeply honoured to accept this role."

Werner Myburgh, CEO of Peace Parks Foundation, said, "We are honoured to welcome President Mutharika as Patron. His support gives weight to the first-of-its-kind co-management model underway in the Nyika–Vwaza landscape. It is unique due to its inclusive governance structure. Communities and local government are usually excluded when it comes to overseeing the management of state protected areas.

"Here, an independent legal entity, founded by the Malawi Government and Peace Parks and accountable for these parks, has brought local community leadership, local government, private sector and independent representatives onto the Board of Trustees to oversee a professional park management team.

"It is exciting to see how park management governance has evolved and adapted to changing times, and we are grateful for President Mutharika's patronage as this important work continues."

Editor's notes

About Peace Parks Foundation

Founded in 1997 by President Nelson Mandela, HRH Prince Bernhard of The Netherlands and Dr. Anton Rupert, Peace Parks Foundation is a leading non-profit organisation pioneering conservation at scale across southern Africa.

Working through Transfrontier Conservation Areas that span national borders, Peace Parks reconnects ecosystems, strengthens local economies, and helps secure the natural assets on which communities depend. Its holistic approach focuses on three pillars: conservation at scale, community development, and commercial sustainability, ensuring that protected areas deliver long-term ecological and economic value.

To date, Peace Parks has helped governments protect more than 780,000 km², co-manages parks where wildlife populations have rebounded fivefold, and supports over 500,000 people through nature-based livelihoods each year. With formal government mandates and strong community partnerships, Peace Parks offers a proven model for building resilience for both people and nature across southern Africa's most iconic landscapes.

The Foundation's Vision 2050 is to secure 18 fully functional transboundary landscapes spanning 980,000 km², making it one of the world's largest land-conservation initiatives.

www.peaceparks.org

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Today, we're pleased to announce the appointment of His Excellency Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi, as a patron of Peace Parks Foundation.

This is important because protecting large, shared landscapes takes long-term cooperation, and it only works when the people who live with these landscapes are part of the decisions, alongside government and other partners.

In Malawi, that approach is reflected in the Nyika–Vwaza Co-Management Trust, where responsibility is shared for sustainable natural resource management and development.

“The Foundation’s commendable work for conservation, alongside the communities who depend on these areas, is truly inspiring,” President Mutharika said. “I am deeply honoured to accept this role.”

Werner Myburgh, CEO of Peace Parks Foundation, added: “We are honoured to welcome President Mutharika as patron. His support reinforces the regional alignment required for conservation at scale, and the continuity that keeps shared landscapes functioning for people and habitats alike.”

#PeaceParksFoundation #Malawi #NyikaVwaza #Conservation #Partnership #SharedResponsibility

Project/Campaign	**Malawi’s President Mutharika announced as patron of Peace Parks**
Deadline (publishing date)	25 Feb
Objective	Announce that President Mutharika has agreed to join Peace Parks as a patron, strengthening our legitimacy and credibility.
Audience	Governments, Donors, partners key stakeholders, journalists
Platform	Media distribution, website, LinkedIn
Content type	Press release, web story, social media post
Risks	

Pre-draft:	Go / No go (CCO + team) – sense check	S Rabe	24.02.2026
Content lead:	drafts to agreed purpose, audience and outcome, image selection	L Barnes, T Goldenberg	25.02.2026
Technical review:	checks facts, sensitivities	G Nxumayo	25.02.2026
Editorial Review:	shapes narrative, structure, tone, clarity, assets for intended audiences, channels	S Rabe	25.02.2026
CCO Review:	strategic alignment, risk awareness and making sure nothing has drifted before it goes up	S Rabe	25.02.2026

Executive Review:	readiness and risk (Werner – only after Sonja has cleared the latest version)	W Myburgh	Add date
Final Approval:	Approved for use	S Rabe	Add date