

Malawi

Women, Business and the Law 2022 (WBL2022) presents an index covering 190 economies and structured around the life cycle of a working woman. In total, 35 questions are scored across eight indicators. Overall scores are then calculated by taking the average of each indicator, with 100 representing the highest possible score. Data refer to the laws and regulations that are applicable to the main business city (Blantyre). Different rules may apply in other jurisdictions so local legislation should be reviewed. Based on this approach, **Malawi scores 77.5 out of 100**. The overall score for Malawi is higher than the regional average observed across Sub-Saharan Africa (71.5). Within the Sub-Saharan Africa region, the maximum score observed is 89.4 (Mauritius).

Malawi - Scores for Women, Business and the Law 2022



Relative Strengths

When it comes to laws affecting women's decisions to work, laws affecting women's pay, constraints related to marriage, and gender differences in property and inheritance, Malawi gets a perfect score.

Areas for Improvement

However, when it comes to constraints on freedom of movement, laws affecting women's work after having children, constraints on women starting and running a business, and laws affecting the size of a woman's pension, Malawi could consider reforms to improve legal equality for women.

For example, one of the lowest scores for Malawi is on the indicator measuring laws affecting women's work after having children (the WBL2022 Parenthood indicator). To improve on the Parenthood indicator, Malawi may wish to consider making paid leave of at least 14 weeks available to mothers, making the government administer 100% of maternity leave benefits, making paid leave available to fathers, and making paid parental leave available.

Recent Reforms

No reforms were observed during the past year (October 2nd, 2020 – October 1st, 2021).



Further data details for Malawi are available at:
<https://wbl.worldbank.org/en/data/exploreconomies/malawi/2022>



	QUESTION	ANSWER	LEGAL BASIS
Mobility	Can a woman choose where to live in the same way as a man?	No	Alberta v Cook (1926) AC 444; Le Mesurier v Le Mesurier 1895 App. Cas. 517
	Can a woman travel outside her home in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Can a woman apply for a passport in the same way as a man?	No	Passport application procedures
	Can a woman travel outside the country in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
Workplace	Can a woman get a job in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Does the law prohibit discrimination in employment based on gender?	Yes	Employment Act, Sec. 5
	Is there legislation on sexual harassment in employment?	Yes	Gender Equality Act, 2013, Sec. 7
	Are there criminal penalties or civil remedies for sexual harassment in employment?	Yes	<i>Criminal:</i> Gender Equality Act, 2013, Secs. 6(2) and 7(2) <i>Civil:</i> No applicable provisions could be located
Pay	Does the law mandate equal remuneration for work of equal value?	Yes	Employment Act, Secs. 3 and 6
	Can a woman work at night in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Can a woman work in a job deemed dangerous in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Can a woman work in an industrial job in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
Marriage	Is there no legal provision that requires a married woman to obey her husband?	Yes	Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act, Arts. 48-50
	Can a woman be head of household in the same way as a man?	Yes	Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act, Arts. 48-50
	Is there legislation specifically addressing domestic violence?	Yes	Prevention of Domestic Violence Act
	Can a woman obtain a judgment of divorce in the same way as a man?	Yes	Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act, Art. 63
Parenthood	Does a woman have the same rights to remarry as a man?	Yes	Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act, Art. 86
	Is paid leave of at least 14 weeks available to mothers?	No	Employment Act, Sec. 47(1)
	Does the government pay 100% of maternity leave benefits?	No	Employment Act, Sec. 47
	Is paid leave available to fathers?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
	Is there paid parental leave?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
Entrepreneurship	Is dismissal of pregnant workers prohibited?	Yes	Employment Act, Sec. 49
	Does the law prohibit discrimination in access to credit based on gender?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
	Can a woman sign a contract in the same way as a man?	Yes	Women's Property Act, Art. 1(2) and (3)
	Can a woman register a business in the same way as a man?	Yes	Business Registration Act, 2013, Secs. 3 and 5
Assets	Can a woman open a bank account in the same way as man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Do men and women have equal ownership rights to immovable property?	Yes	Married Women's Property Act, Secs. 1, 2 and 5
	Do sons and daughters have equal rights to inherit assets from their parents?	Yes	Deceased Estates (Wills, Inheritance and Protection) Act, Sec. 17
	Do female and male surviving spouses have equal rights to inherit assets?	Yes	Deceased Estates (Wills, Inheritance and Protection) Act, Sec. 17
	Does the law grant spouses equal administrative authority over assets during marriage?	Yes	Married Women's Property Act, Secs. 1, 2 and 5
	Does the law provide for the valuation of nonmonetary contributions?	Yes	Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act, Art. 74(g)
Pension	Is the age at which men and women can retire with full pension benefits the same?	Yes	Women: Pension Act, Sec. 3. Men: Pension Act, Sec. 3
	Is the age at which men and women can retire with partial pension benefits the same?	Yes	Women: No applicable provisions could be located. Men: No applicable provisions could be located
	Is the mandatory retirement age for men and women the same?	Yes	Women: No applicable provisions could be located. Men: No applicable provisions could be located
	Are periods of absence due to childcare accounted for in pension benefits?	No	No applicable provisions could be located