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# Kaliati appeal for opposition help on fertilizer subsidy

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**Kaliati: Dont blame government if opposition fail to cooperate**

Malawi government has asked the opposition legislators to work together with traditional leaders in their respective constituencies in the implementation of this year's K19 billion fertilizer subsidy programme, cautioning that they should not blame government if the programme fails.

Minister of Information and Civic Education, Patricia Kaliati who had problems expressing herself in English during a news conference she held in Lilongwe with no official from the Ministry of Agriculture to assist her with matters of policy, made the remarks.

The minister held the news conference in an apparent damage control exercise after deputy minister of trade and industry, Ellock Maotcha Banda's letter ordering District Commissioner for Machinga to register only supporters of ruling DPP was leaked to the media.

Kaliati said only 1.7million people would benefit from the programme leaving out scores of beneficiaries of about 3.5 million, which Ministry of Agriculture registered.

"Not all those who were registered by the ministry of Agriculture would be able to benefit from the programme. This year, we are only targeting the neediest about 1.7million," informed the minister.

She said thirteen in every twenty would get access to the coupons and appealed to opposition members to help government in identifying the needy.

"They need to work with the traditional leaders to make this programme a huge success. If they will not cooperate, they should not dare blame government in case of any failure," said Kaliati.

But MCP Spokesperson on Agriculture, Vitus Dzoole Mwale said there are strong indications that this year's programme will be a "huge disaster".

"You don't have to be an expert. You can see that there are signs of a failing programme here. What does she want us to support?" queried Mwale.

Last year's subsidy programme was in a mess. Cabinet ministers were given about 2000 coupons each to be distributed among DPP faithfuls and some of them ended up on sale.

A senior cabinet Minister, Bob Khamisa lost his portfolio due to issues relating to the coupons.

Already there are reports that some ministers are going around the country asking people to join the DPP if they are to benefit from the subsidy programme.