

# Story Workshop reaffirms commitment in addressing agricultural issues

STORY Workshop has reaffirmed its commitment in providing a forum for dialogue on controversial issues as a means of addressing problems stifling the agricultural sector in the country.

Story Workshop Rural Development Programme Officer Redge Masupayi made the remarks on Monday in Blantyre during a radio debate on accessibility of credit facilities to people living in rural areas.

Masupayi said the debate, which is the sixth in the series of Story Workshop radio debates, will be aired on MBC Radio One on March 10 at 11o' clock am.

Said Masupayi, "The need for more access to credit is in line

with national aims of ensuring that the credit system benefits a wider spectrum of smallholder farmers. These farmers are in need of such facilities."

The Story Workshop advocates policy changes that support food security, environmental and rural development. Its activities which are media based include radio soap opera, a farmers radio magazine, rural development and policy advocacy.

The activities are implemented through radio programmes such as *Zimachitika*, *Mwana Alirenji* and monthly radio debates.

Story Workshop's radio debates are supported by the

European Commission's Food Security and Food Aid Programme through the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation.

The debates, among other things, discuss issues ranging from rural farmers development and micro-finance lending institutions to loan repayment.

Story Workshop Managing Director Marvin Hanke maintains that it is imperative that farmers and policy planners get involved in these debates to avoid acquiring wrong information from other people who would misinterpret.

Participants tabled views on how to instil credit repayment discipline among

smallholder farmers and on ways of reducing bias when giving out credits to farmers.

Commissions Officer for Story Workshop Gondwe disclosed that findings from development research by Story Workshop indicates that most farm inputs loan programmes are put in place without any civic education to beneficiaries.