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An Exploration of Meteorological Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Salima District, Malawi

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ABSTRACT The paper explores the indigenous knowledge systems (IKS), which people of Salima District of Malawi use to predict meteorological phenomena. This follows evidence of the failure of modern early warning systems in the face of adverse weather conditions. Exploratory Concurrent Mixed Methods were used to collect data from 55 respondents who comprised traditional community leaders, community elders and the youths. The estimated weather prediction probabilities constituted the quantitative component of the study. The meteorological IKS was classified into five major interpretive categories namely, flora, fauna, clouds, wind, and the planetary system. The study concluded that rich meteorological IKS in Salima District are widely known and shared. Most of the predictors show high predictive power averaging seventy percent, hence the communities' reliance on them. The study concludes that if properly incorporated into the mainstream meteorological prediction systems, IKS have the potential to improve communities' disaster preparedness in the face of changing climatic conditions.