

Growing food security

Mary is a farmer in rural Malawi, she has benefited from a livelihood restoration programme delivered by the **Salima Solar** project.

Reflecting on life before JCM Power undertook the training, Mary said: "I used to harvest very little. I used to plant 3 to 4 maize seeds per plot and sometimes only one maize plant could have a healthy cob. I had challenges in accessing enough fertiliser. My maize yield was around fourteen bags per year."

The Ulimi Ndi Moyo programme was delivered by JCM Power for 210 project affected people living close to its 60MWac Salima Solar plant. Mary says, "I am feeling good. The programme gave us inputs such as fertiliser, good quality seeds and groundnuts. I lacked knowledge and JCM taught us about preparing the land, planting, applying fertiliser and how to protect our crops from losses after harvesting. The extension support was awesome and helpful!"

As the project enters a new phase focusing on empowering farmers to develop their farming as a business, Mary says, "We are now food secured. We have managed to harvest sixty bags of maize this season. That is enough for

consumption, and we have surplus for sale which will give me money to buy fertiliser and pesticides to help me in my next farming season. My family is very happy. We have no worries about what we are going to eat tomorrow." She has also seen interest from other community members in her new farming methods, "Some people have admired the planting of one maize seed per plot. They are saying they will also use the same method."

Mary has big plans for the future, "I don't want to go backwards!" Having recently bought a new four-acre field which she plans to plant with maize, Mary will be able to rotate her crops by planting her existing field with groundnuts.

