

## **World Blood Donor Day 2017**

Association of Blood Donation Organisers

Municipality of Quatre-Bornes – Saturday 10 June 2017

Hon. Dr Husnoo, Minister of Health and Quality of life

Hon. Toussaint, Minister of Youth and Sports

Hon. Benydin, Paliamentary Private Secretary

Your worship the Mayor of Quatre Bornes, Mr Sonoo

The President of MACOSS, Mr Chengan

All of you – Generous Blood Donors

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. I am very pleased to be among you this afternoon to celebrate together the World Donors Day which fall on 14<sup>th</sup> June (World Blood Donor Day – 14 June)

(Birthday of Karl Landsteiner – The scientist who discovered the ABO blood groups system)

2. This is a day to recognise and thank all of you who have donated your blood on a voluntary, altruistic and free basis in order to help save the lives and improve the lives of fellow human beings. Our thanks also go to all the Blood Donation organisers who create the conditions and the platform for individuals to donate their blood.

3. Giving blood is giving life. It is one of the greatest and most precious gifts from one human being to another.

4. No price tag can be put on the life of a human being. The beauty of blood donation is that the poorest of human being, without any material wealth or bank account can contribute to save the life of a millionaire. Our blood makes us rich, in a way.

5. Everybody, practically speaking, with very little exceptions, everybody can donate his blood. Not just once but a number of times over time – normally up to four times.

6. In Mauritius, the number of blood pints collected yearly is around 46,000 and the yearly requirement is around 52,000. There is therefore a deficit of around 6,000 pints. (around 12%)

7. However, local statistics show that the great majority of blood donors, that is 87%, donate blood only once a year.

8. Those who give twice a year drop to 10.9%. Those who give 3 times a year is a very low 1.7% 4 times or more less than a quarter %. So if we want to make up for the deficit in blood collection which is about 6,000 pints – an appeal can be made to the once a year donors to repeat their generous gesture just once more.

9. Another group who can contribute to make up for the deficit is the ladies. Statistics show that 80% of blood donors are men. Women's associations have some work to do. But I know there are good reasons, which make it more difficult for girls and women to give their blood.

10. Personally, I have given my blood on two occasions.

11. Giving one's blood is a beautiful human action and it is a joy forever. Every blood donor is a hero.

12. Donating blood is relatively safe.

13. Research published in 2012 demonstrated that repeated blood donation is effective in reducing blood pressure, blood glucose, the low-density to high density protein ratio and the heart rate in patients with metabolic syndrome.

14. We are fortunate to have, in Mauritius, many philanthropic associations, be it corporates, cultural, social or religious, which organise regular blood donation sessions to service the Blood Transfusion Division of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life. These Organisations have been grouped under the umbrella of the Association of Blood Donation Organisers which is hosting today's event and to whom we are grateful. Since 1995, this Association has been actively involved in the organisation of blood donation and other health related activities throughout Mauritius. The Association has conducted several successful campaigns in recruiting voluntary blood donors and is moving ahead with confidence towards its objective of ensuring a steady supply of blood in our blood banks.

15. We must be very grateful to these organisations and the voluntary blood donors for giving the gift of life. However, I feel that blood donors associations must focus more attention on the safety of blood donation and its benefits, which many people are not aware of. Some people are afraid to donate blood because they are under the impression that there are associated risks in doing so. Very often we read posters, we hear announcements about the importance of donating blood as it relates to the actual donors. So, I believe all campaigns must motivate blood donors by spelling out the benefits for the donors as well. We have to promote the image of blood donation as a happy moment in which health and civic consciousness meet.

16. I will conclude by again expressing my thanks and appreciation to all blood donors for their generosity and to all members of the Blood Donations

Organisers for your dedicated efforts to ensure a constant supply of blood for those in need.

17. Giving blood is a beautiful expression of human love and solidarity. It is true – every blood donor is a hero. Keep it up. Organise the collection of blood. Give blood. Give now. Give again and again.

Thanks to Municipality of Quatre-Bornes, MACOSS, PPS for their support.

Thank you