

**Campaign launch of Mega Blood Donation by Blood Donors Association on 12  
December 2023 at 15:00 hrs University of Mauritius**

**Professor Sanjeev Sobhee, Vice Chancellor, University of Mauritius**

**Your Worship Mr Mamode Issop NUZURAULLY, Lord Mayor of the  
Municipal Council of the City of Port Louis**

**Dr Mrs Janaki SONOO - Director of Central Laboratory Services**

**Mr Frederic RIVIERE, Managing Director TOTAL Energies**

**Mr Dewanand HOSSEN, President of Blood Donors Association**

**Ladies and gentlemen**

**All protocol observed**

Good afternoon

It is an honour for me to address you on this special occasion to launch the Mega Blood Donation organised by the Blood Donors Association.

No matter how further science advances, blood, which is part of human body, cannot be artificially created. That is why blood donation is more precious than anything else in the world as the donated blood saves millions of lives every year.

In Mauritius the demand for blood continues to grow each year and this can be attributed to expansion in health services, improved health care facilities and introduction of high tech medical procedures like cardiac surgery and increased number of cancer patients who need transfusion support during their cancer chemotherapy.

As you are all aware, there can be no greater gift in life than the gift of life itself. Giving blood is giving life. It is one of the greatest and most precious gifts from one human being to another. 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.

We must look at blood donation as a shared responsibility and also, everyone's social responsibility. **"Blood connects us all"**. Blood is the one intrinsic element that is a truly universal link that connects each of us; transcending race, language, religion or nationality. No matter where you are in society, it is the one thing that you can give, and save the life of another human being.

### **Ladies and gentlemen**

There are many advantages to donate blood and no single reason as to why you should not. The most important advantage is that the person whose life is saved because of you will remember you for life and will bless you.

The fast ageing population presents a double-edged challenge. On one hand, we risk a decline in blood supply as blood donors mature and are more susceptible to health problems. On the other hand, we expect an increase in the demand for blood, as the elderly develop health complications that require blood transfusions.

The fragile balance between blood supply and demand have forced the Blood Bank and the various Blood Donor Organisations to constantly search for more efficient ways to recruit blood donors.

Blood services associations should re-orient their social marketing strategies to encourage blood donation in the future. Blood donor recruitment involves education, information and motivation techniques such as meeting with various groups of people, dissemination of education and information material on blood donation.

I suggest that Awareness Campaign be held in Secondary Schools and University Campus, while making a survey among the students to know the reasons why young people do not give blood. The results will assist Blood Donors Associations in orienting their campaigns.

We can also organise roadshows and learning journeys to the Bloodbanks, to provide opportunities for the public to learn more about blood donation.

It is estimated that only 10% of youth between 18 to 25 years are donating blood.

Thus, ladies and gentlemen, targeting young people to donate blood is a particularly promising option.

I think it is really important to promote blood donation to young people because they can become lifelong donors and they will inspire others to donate too.

Peer pressure is such a powerful force and there is no reason it should not be a force for good. There is need to train young volunteers to become ambassadors for the blood bank. These ambassadors will in turn motivate their peers in educational establishments, youth clubs and other organisations meant for young people.

Blood donor associations must consider including some young people on their committees and involve them in their campaigns. Others seeing their peers participating in this pro-social behaviour are likely to join in and so the next generation of donors is established.

Campaigns and advertising methods focused on the emergent needs for blood donation could play an important role in the recruitment of new donors among students.

You must do your best to make blood donation easy and convenient. Targeting specific age groups and shifting your donor recruitment strategies can have a positive impact on your donor base.

It is important to consider all of your options when it comes to bringing donors to your donor center. Be where your donors are.

Campaigning should be an on-going process, and not only when there is a mega blood collection.

Many countries are using social media to motivate and recruit blood donors. Billboards can be displayed in places where the young people frequently gather, for example stadium.

Recruiting and retaining young donors not only improves the long-term safety and sufficiency of a country's blood supply, but also promotes safe and healthy lifestyles.

**Ladies and gentlemen**

I would like to commend the good work of the Blood Donors Association and other blood donation organisers and thank them for working tirelessly to support the National Blood Programme. Not only you are helping to ensure a sustainable supply of blood for patients in Mauritius, you have also played a vital role in strengthening community bonding and provided important alternative avenues for many others to donate blood through your efforts

In closing, I would like to commend and thank blood donors for their life-saving donations; it will continue to provide a regular source of blood needed in hospitals and health facilities.

I would strongly encourage everyone gathered here; people in good health who have never given blood, particularly young people, to begin doing so.

**“Give freely, give often. Blood donation matters.”** You will never know when the blood you give becomes a gift of life to a trauma or road accident victim who urgently needs a blood transfusion to survive. The Blood Donor of today may be recipient of tomorrow.

I hope that someday; Mauritius can collect above 90% or even 100% of blood supplies from voluntary unpaid donors.

I wish that the Mega Blood Donation of 2023 to be a great success and why not to set a record in the number of pints of blood collected during the campaign.

I seize this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year 2024, while hoping that the festive period will not cause a hike in the demand for blood transfusion.

Thank You