

## **ENSURING INCREASED ACCESSIBILITY TO BLOOD DONATIONS BY VNRDs**

Blood donor recruitment campaigns and blood collection sessions take place on a daily basis. MBTS has 8 mobile blood donor teams that go out to schools, colleges, places of worship and workplaces on a daily basis to conduct blood collection drives. This is taking place in Blantyre, Chiradzulu, Mangochi, Zomba, Mwanza, Thyolo, Mulanje, Chikwawa, Balaka and Machinga districts in the Southern Region and Lilongwe, Mchinji, Dedza, Salima, Dowa, Kasungu, and Ntcheu districts in the Central Region and Mzimba district in the Northern Region. This has improved the amount of blood that is being collected. Special appeals for blood donations are made during the period when most schools and colleges are on holidays. MBTS has plans to increase the catchment for blood donors by including more districts in the Central and Northern regions.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS**

The following are some of the achievements of MBTS since it commenced operations in January 2004;

- MBTS recruited and trained 106 staff in all departments; including administration, laboratory, public relations and blood donor clinic nurses and support staff;
- Two temporary centres have been established in Blantyre and Lilongwe. These operate two static blood donor centres, eight mobile blood collection teams, two component production laboratories, a blood Cold Chain system and a Quality Management System;
- MBTS started a national quality assurance scheme in April 2006 for immuno-haematological and infectious disease testing.
- More than 380 nurses, 120 Physicians/Clinical Officers; 75 laboratory staff and 85 students of biomedical sciences have been trained in transfusion practice;
- In patients admitted to Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital (QECH – a major referral hospital), a decrease in mortality has been recorded :
  - 60% in seriously ill children and
  - 50% in women with pregnancy related blood loss.
- In a newspaper interview Prof. Elizabeth Molyneux, Head of Paediatrics at the College of Medicine and QECH referred to the MBTS as: 'the one piece of good news; it has made blood available, such that 'we (doctors etc) can now save children's lives' (Weekend Nation of 15-16 October, 2005, page 21) (annex 1).
- Nearly 50,000 units of blood have been collected from January 2004 to December 2006. The target is 50,000 units per annum by 2008;

- MBTS has been invited by WHO and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRCRCS) to international meetings to present MBTS as a model;
- Recognized by WHO as a model in the management and organisation of a National Blood Transfusion Service in all developing countries. MBTS was featured in the World Blood Donor Day's celebration for 2005 (Annex 2)