

# PRESS RELEASE

## MALAWI BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICE



**Announcing World Blood Donor Day, 14 June 2008**

***“Share Life.... Donate Blood!”***

**World Blood Donor Day** is celebrated every year on 14 June to honour and thank those people who give the most special gift of all – the Gift of Life, by donating their blood on a voluntary, non remunerated (unpaid) basis.

In 2008, the global theme of World Blood Donor Day is **“Giving Blood Regularly....Once is not Enough”** to support national blood donor programs in building a stable base of voluntary unpaid donors who make a long-term commitment to blood donation.

World Health Organization (WHO), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), International Federation of Blood Donor Organizations (FIODS) and International Society of Blood Transfusion (ISBT) have collaborated to celebrate World Blood Donor Day 2008 globally. These founding partners will this year hold a global event in Dubai, hosted by the Government of the United Arab Emirates under the direct patronage of His Highness, President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

Malawi Blood Transfusion Service (**MBTS**) in collaboration with the Blood Donor Association of Malawi (**BDAM**) will, for the fifth year running, join the international community to commemorate the day on June 14. To mark the day, MBTS and BDAM will organise events and activities at the First Merchant Bank Car Park in Blantyre, where representatives of blood donors from across the country will be in attendance. The Minister of Health, Honourable Khumbo Kachali, MP will be the Guest of Honour. The day will be commemorated under a local theme: ***“Share Life. Donate Blood”*** to highlight the need for more voluntary non-remunerated blood donors in the Country. Current estimates suggest that Malawi requires 60,000 units of safe blood annually. Only slightly over half of that amount was collected last year. With the population estimated at over 12 million, it is evident that the Country needs more blood donors.

World Blood Donor Day focuses on the life-saving gift of voluntary unpaid blood donors who donate blood purely for altruistic reasons. It gives the World an opportunity to thank existing blood donors for their honourable life-saving gift while encouraging those who have never donated blood to ‘Share Life and Donate Blood’.

The day is also a call to action to governments, national health authorities, funding partners, the private sector, heads of institutions and organisations, community leaders, and all members of the public to intensify efforts in supporting national blood services to ensure the safety and adequacy of blood available for the country's citizenry.

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