



Intervention by the President of FIODS on the World Blood Donor Day 2009 celebration.

Ms Minister, your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.

Every year more than **50 million** of the world's citizens give blood to help their fellow human beings.

All studies show, that before taking the all important decision to become a donor, 2 out of 3 donors were recruited by **direct personal contact** from family members, friends, colleagues or by volunteers.

On this World Blood Donor Day I would like to **salute the hundred of thousands of volunteers**, who not only give blood, but also give "sweat" to help our blood services recruit and retain sufficient numbers of donors.

In many countries **volunteers associations** play a crucial role in developing the necessary donor base for a sufficient and stable blood supply.

The International Federation of Blood Donor Organisations (also known as FIODS) unite these volunteers worldwide – and I am proud to say, that we are especially well represented in countries, which have already achieved **full self-sufficiency in all blood products** from voluntary non-remunerated blood and blood plasma donors.

Our studies also show that - in average - a person has **reflected for over a year** before taking the step to become a donor.

So the idea of voluntary blood donation should **constantly be present in the media**, and World Blood Donor Day was created to bring our message to the public through friendly media around the world.

The theme of this year's World Blood Donor Day is **100 % voluntary non-remunerated donation of blood and blood components**. This is a message to all of us.

Rich countries (in which I include our wonderful host country Australia) should become **completely** self sufficient in blood products (including immuno-globulines) from un-paid donation.

Producing and **importing blood products from paid blood** is **highly unethical**. Persons, who have to sell their blood, tend to be poor un-employed people, living in drug infected areas, needing the extra income from selling a part of their body to survive.

Self-sufficiency in plasma products also means that **patients** can be **sure of the necessary supply** of life saving medicines - at prices all patients can afford. The **world market** for plasma-derivatives is **highly volatile**, and any country **dependent on import** of plasma derivatives takes a **high risk**, that one day the **products simply are not there** for the patients because of decisions taken by **other governments or private companies**.

For the same reason **developing countries** should make greater efforts to have their **recovered plasma** from full blood donations used for needed plasma products. Every year over **6 million liters of plasma** from poor countries are **not being utilized** - while poor patients at the same time can not afford the rapidly rising prices for plasma products from the world market. Such waste of the gift of blood is not acceptable either.

Rich countries should help their **poor neighbours** to achieve full self-sufficiency. Our **host** is a leading nation in the Pacific region – and on this World Blood Donor Day celebration I call for Australian leadership towards achieving 100 % non-remunerated blood products in all parts of the Pacific region.

Luckily, **most blood is collected from voluntary, non-remunerated donors** – and the International Blood Donor Day was created by FIODS in 1995 to highlight the every day life saving act of blood donation.

Blood donors come from **all walks of life** and all parts of the world, and every year they give more than **85 million blood donations**. We may all one day need treatment by blood, but less than one percent of the world's population gives blood. So **we need many more donors**, if **all patients** shall be guaranteed proper treatment with safe blood products.

The **act of blood donation** is **unique**, and blood donors are **special people**. We should all **salute these everyday heroes for their help to their fellow human beings**.

We need them – and we **need more good people**, who will give a part of themselves to others.

So a huge thank you to our blood donors ! – and also an enormous thank you to Australia for this wonderful celebration of World Blood Donor Day 2009!

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