

UN Namibia Blood Donor Day Clinic

Every year, on 14 June, countries around the world celebrate World Blood Donor Day. The event serves to thank voluntary unpaid blood donors for their life-saving gifts of blood and to raise awareness of the need for regular blood donations to ensure quality, safety and availability of blood and blood products for patients in need.

On Friday the 10th of June 2015, the United Nations Communications Group (UNCG) hosted a World Blood Donor Day Clinic to commemorate the day which was celebrated on the 14th of June. This year's theme was "Thank You for Saving My Life". The event took place at the United Nations House. The aim of hosting the Blood Donor Day Clinic was to provide UN staff with the opportunity to participate in the selfless act of donating blood.

A short programme preceded the actual blood donation drive wherein the UNCG Secretariat, United Nations Information Centre's Anthea Basson lead the programme for the day. The UNCG Chairperson Ms. Emma Mbekele delivered the opening remarks, gauging the different blood groups present among the staff members, she went on to highlight the important campaign slogan, "Give freely, give often. Blood Donation matters" and the significance of the blood drive. Her message was short and powerful; it thanked the UN staff and encouraged them to repeat this practice going forward.

The UN in Namibia's Resident Coordinator a.i. Ms. Michaela Marques de Sousa delivered a profound address to the UN staff members present, she noted how UN Staff are unequivocally important instruments in policy formulation and interventions spurring and supporting the national development of the country, but called each UN staff member to task on the opportunity to donate blood, a substance which cannot be manufactured in a laboratory, but only given selflessly from human to another. She truly led by example as she also donated blood and called upon all UN staff to do the same.

UNAIDS Country Coordinator Mr. Tharcisse Barihuta delivered a message on behalf of WHO to commemorate the day. He highlighted the campaign importance and objectives

as well as some statistical data on blood donations in Namibia as well as the shortfall. His address was a timely reminder of how important blood donation is to save lives. He noted how one blood donor can save up to three lives!

The vote of thanks was presented by a UNCG member from IOM Mr. Tadeus Nendongo, who gave a special thanks to Sign Solutions for their donations of stickers for the event. The World Blood Donor Day stickers were presented to all staff in attendance. He thanked the UN Staff for their attendance and donation.

The Blood Transfusion Service of Namibia team was present for the blood drive, attending to all the questions of the UN Staff. As staff started completing the donor forms, the blood drive kicked off in full swing. During the drive, hearty goulash and vegetable soup was served to UN Staff. UNIC Windhoek team members walked from door to door to canvass additional support toward the blood drive. The turnout was very good, and although some staff members were afraid at first, the UN staff who donated blood felt elated at the thought of saving a human life!

UNIC Windhoek who coordinated the event on behalf of the UNCG was pleased that the target of blood donations was made. The event was successful due to the participation and support of the UN Staff in Namibia as well as the UN Country team.