



Media Release
14 June 2006

Blood donors celebrate gift of life with sandcastle building and carnival fun

Singapore, 14 June 2006 – About 3,000 blood donors gathered at the East Coast Park today to join Singapore in celebrating World Blood Donor Day [WBDD] 2006.

Organised by the Singapore Red Cross and the Health Sciences Authority, celebration highlights included sandcastle building, carnival activities, circus workshops and performances as well as a spectacular fireworks display. As part of the celebrations, a “Wall of Life Savers” was also created and featured some 200 photographs of blood donors making their commitment to saving lives.

Held every 14 June, WBDD acknowledges and celebrates the contribution and spirit of voluntary non-remunerative blood donation. This special occasion is marked on this day by international agencies across 192 countries, together with the World Health Organisation, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Society of Blood Transfusion and the International Federation of Blood Donor Organisations.

The global launch for this year’s WBDD celebrations was held in Bangkok, and Singapore was represented by a delegation of our youth blood donors. The slogan for this year’s global celebration - ‘**I am a/an (occupation) and I save lives**’ exemplifies the message that no matter who you are or what you do, you can come forward to be a blood donor and help save lives.

‘**Building Lives, Connecting Communities**’ is the theme chosen for celebrations in Singapore this year. This encapsulates the essence of blood donation, which connects people from all walks of life in coming together to donate blood and help save lives. The sandcastle building activity was spearheaded by our youth blood donors with many other blood donors and their families joining in to create a beautiful sandcastle city.

“The focus of World Blood Donor Day 2006 is commitment – commitment from all. The theme ‘Building lives, Connecting communities’ demonstrates our steadfast commitment to involving our community in saving lives,” highlighted Associate Professor Phua Kai Hong, Vice Chairman, Singapore Red Cross, on the importance of community involvement in reaching out to more potential blood donors.

Mr Heng Chee How, Minister of State for Health, graced the occasion as the Guest-of-Honour. In his speech, Mr Heng emphasised that *“the commitment of blood donors helps to ensure that all in need of blood will not be made vulnerable. Blood donation is about people helping people. As visible in this evening’s event, all of you have come together in this symbolic action of ‘building lives and connecting communities’ through this beautiful sandcastle city.”*

He also congratulated the Centre for Transfusion Medicine of the Health Sciences Authority for being the first national blood service in Asia to achieve accreditation by the AABB. This is a significant milestone for the national blood programme as it affirms the high quality in our national blood supply by international standards. This international recognition brings a special significance, coinciding with the 60th Anniversary of the National Blood Programme in Singapore.

Singapore Red Cross & Health Sciences Authority

14 June 2006

▪ **About the Singapore Red Cross**

As the National Blood Donor Recruiter, the Singapore Red Cross is part of the world’s largest humanitarian network, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which comprises 181 Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies around the world, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The Movement’s work is based on the seven fundamental principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality.

For more information on the National Blood Programme, log on to the Singapore Red Cross’ website at www.redcross.org.sg.

▪ **About the Health Sciences Authority (HSA)**

At HSA, we apply medical, pharmaceutical and specialised scientific expertise to safeguard public health and safety in Singapore. As one multidisciplinary agency, we serve as the national regulator of all therapeutic products by providing a seamless yet rigorous regulatory process to the healthcare and biomedical sciences industries. We also operate the national blood bank, Bloodbank@HSA, protecting the integrity of the nation’s blood supply. As the national reference agency, we exploit specialised scientific, forensic, investigative and analytical capabilities in order to serve the administration of justice and enhance safety in our community. For more details, visit www.hsa.gov.sg

▪ **About the Bloodbank@HSA**

The Bloodbank@HSA is managed by HSA’s Centre for Transfusion Medicine (CTM). At CTM, we are responsible for collecting, processing, testing and distributing blood and blood products to all hospitals in Singapore, both public and private. As the national blood service, we provide specialised services in transfusion sciences such as immunohaematology and tissue typing. Our transfusion medicine specialists also provide professional advice and consultations to clinicians in Singapore and the region, so as to promote the best practices in clinical transfusion medicine and to ensure that every blood donation is optimally and safely used.

For more details, visit www.hsa.gov.sg, select the “CTM” button.