

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Pete Townshend's Music Amplifies African *World Blood Donor Day* Celebrations**

- Musician Pete Townshend has given permission for his classic song 'Give Blood' (hear on [Spotify](#) and [YouTube](#)) to be used for the first time to promote blood donation on 14 June. Global Blood Fund, a charity focused on encouraging voluntary blood donation, has produced world-music interpretations in multiple languages for international use to inspire a new generation of blood donors.
- World Blood Donor Day is one of only 9 official WHO Global Health Days, celebrating each year the vital contributions of tens of millions of blood donors around the world in enabling hospital procedures and saving lives. This year's event is especially important as the global pandemic has devastated worldwide blood collection.

**Africa, 09 June 2021-** To celebrate *World Blood Donor Day* on 14 June, Global Blood Fund (GBF) has partnered with the Africa Society for Blood Transfusion (Afsbt), and the Coalition of Blood for Africa (CoBA) to release multiple interpretations of Pete Townshend's song '*Give Blood*', performed by leading African artists.

The videos can be shared on social media and through other channels, and are being donated by the charity free-of-charge to blood services across Africa (and Latin America and the Middle East) for use on and around World Blood Donor Day.

Pete Townshend, guitarist and principal songwriter for the legendary rock band, *The Who*, comments; "Although it is now more than 35 years since I wrote the song 'Give Blood', this is the first time it has actually been used to encourage blood donation. Shortage of blood around the world is a huge issue, particularly in poorer countries, and so I was delighted to give permission for Global Blood Fund to use my work to help communicate the need for more donors to come forward."

The World Health Organization (WHO) states that the minimum number of units of blood needed to sustain an adequate level of health equals 1% of a nation's population – 10 units per 1000 people. Yet many African countries fall well short of this minimum goal. The lack of infrastructure and equipment for collection and processing of blood components is a key impediment to providing a sustainable blood supply, as is a shortage of volunteer donors. Though blood and safe transfusion services are essential parts of any strong health system, the safety, sustainability and adequacy of blood remains a major health challenge in many African countries.

GBF's Executive Director, Gavin Evans, explains the thinking behind the approach. "Each year it becomes harder for messages about the importance of blood donation to cut through to the public, even though tens of thousands tragically die because of blood shortages. But with music such an influential part of people's lives – especially in many of those countries that struggle most to collect enough blood – for 2021 we are using lyrics and melody to highlight the extraordinary impact of donor generosity. Not only do these individuals help save the lives of those in need of a blood transfusion, but the benefit to family, friends and the wider community of helping that patient recover is also profound. Using music as the medium, we think we have really powerful messaging – and a great set of songs that people will enjoy in their own right."

Working closely with national and regional blood services across Africa, the music tracks will be released through multiple channels in the run up to 14 June, with national blood services encouraged to ‘get creative’ in how they use materials; as Bungoma County in Kenya did [here](#).

Evans adds; “Our hope is that thousands of new life-saving blood donors will come forward in all the countries using these materials.”

The following versions of the song, which are featured in a purpose-made video, are being released:

- [African English](#)
- [African English \(alternative\)](#)
- [African French](#)
- [Arabic](#)
- [Spanish](#)
- [UK English](#)

As well as YouTube links above, all materials can also be accessed via <https://globalbloodfund.org/wbdd-resources/>

### **About Global Blood Fund**

GBF is a charity registered in Oklahoma, US, and England, UK. Each year around 120 million units of blood are collected worldwide, but poorer parts of the world – home to 84% of the population – collect only just over half of this. Shortages in low-HDI countries are common and lack of availability for transfusion leads to tens of thousands of premature deaths; particularly among young children experiencing complications from malaria and mothers in childbirth. GBF aims to re-balance these inequalities. It does this by providing training, equipment, money and other forms of support. It is particularly focused on encouraging voluntary donation, recognized by the WHO as the most effective and cost-efficient of all possible interventions. More at <https://globalbloodfund.org/>

### **About the Africa Society for Blood Transfusion**

Afsbt is the Africa’s leading professional organization serving the blood banking community. Its mission is to advocate for the highest ethical and professional standards and skills in blood transfusion across the continent; enabling safe, universally accessible and sustainable national blood programmes in participating countries. More at <https://afsbt.org/>

### **About the Coalition of Blood for Africa**

CoBA was launched in 2020 with the goal of finding solutions to the perennial challenges of sufficient, safe blood on the continent. The coalition brings together an unprecedented array of health experts, including public-sector research institutes, ministries of health, academia, not-for-profit research and development organisations, NGOs, international organizations and private sector organisations all committed to one goal: access to safe, sustainable blood in Africa. More at <https://cobafrica.org/>

### **For Further Information**

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