To all my many friends and colleagues, and members of AfSBT, I thank you for the privilege of walking the road with you, towards a safer and more sustainable blood supply for patients in Africa.

Beryl Armstrong
– outgoing, retiring editor

The time has come for me to say goodbye. I retire from AfSBT at the end of July 2017 and although I will continue to be available as a resource for guidance and support as and when required, I will no longer be actively involved in the programmes as a member of staff of the AfSBT Management Office.

Before the Society was born (in 1997) I had this dream of being involved in an organisation promoting blood safety in Africa, and AfSBT gave me the opportunity to live my dream, for which I am truly grateful.

I hand over the baton to Heidi Goubran, who will be the new AfSBT Communications Manager. Heidi is introduced in this issue of the newsletter.

Introducing the new AfSBT Communications Manager

Dr Heidi Goubran is a medical doctor with specialization in Transfusion Medicine and Healthcare Management including communication and marketing. She is fluent in English and Arabic with a good knowledge of French. Dr Goubran has been holding diverse technical and managerial positions related to blood services and became involved in several international consultancies. Her diverse work spectrum provided her with an extensive network and experience in public sector, non-governmental domains, international organizations and United Nations agencies.

During her era of work at the Egyptian National Blood Transfusion Services, she participated in developing policies and strategies, conducted national and international collaborative studies, and was significantly involved in organizing national, regional and international meetings and congresses. Dr Goubran co-chaired the blood safety panel of the Egyptian National Strategy for Prevention and Control of Hepatitis.

On the regional and international levels, she worked as a technical advisor/consultant for the Swiss Red Cross and World Health Organization, and served as the Health Officer for the International Committee of the Red Cross in Egypt. An additional sphere of her experience was working for the United Nations where she was managing the Health Promotion and Outreach Programme, in this regard; she executed projects targeting vulnerable population sectors of African countries and coordinated numerous successful promotional and fund-raising events.

And incoming editor, Blood is Life

July 2017

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World Hepatitis Day, 28 July 2017

This year’s World Hepatitis Day is commemorated under the theme “Eliminate Hepatitis” to mobilize intensified action towards the health targets in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

The first global health sectors strategy on viral hepatitis of WHO was endorsed by the World Health Assembly to help countries scale up their responses. Blood safety lies under one of the core intervention areas, together with injection and surgical safety. Transmission of viral hepatitis B and C in health care settings can be stopped through the rigorous application of universal precautions for all invasive medical interventions, among which, securing the safe supply of blood products.

World Hepatitis Day
http://www.who.int/campaigns/hepatitis-day/2017/en/

Global health sectors strategy on viral hepatitis
http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/246177/1/WHO-HIV-2016.06-eng.pdf?ua=1

Global Hepatitis Report 2017
http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/255016/1/9789241565455-eng.pdf?ua=1

African Union Heads of State and Government commit to accelerate the implementation of International Health Regulations

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 4 July 2017: Heads of State and Government meeting on Tuesday adopted the Declaration on Accelerating Implementation of International Health Regulations in Africa. The Declaration seeks to address the increasing public health events and recurrent epidemics on the continent and their huge socio-economic impact. Many African countries have not adequately implemented International Health Regulations to prevent, protect against, control and provide a public health response to the international spread of diseases.

“A fundamental part of a government’s basic duty is to protect its citizens against health insecurity, risks and emergencies, it is therefore important that AU Member States meet the International Health Regulations core capacities in disease outbreak
AU Heads of State, Govt. commit to implementation of health regulations cont…

prevention, preparedness and response” said Her Excellency Amira El Fadil, the Commissioner for Social Affairs at the African Union Commission.

African Heads of State and Government committed in the Declaration to accelerate the implementation of International Health Regulations at national, provincial and local levels with a clear roadmap and monitoring mechanisms. They further committed to mobilise resources and put in place multi-sectoral mechanisms to accelerate its implementation.

The Declaration tasks the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, African Union Commission, World Health Organisation and other stakeholders to work together to provide the necessary technical support to Member States to accelerate implementation. The Declaration further directs the African Union Commission, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organisation to report on its implementation within the context of the collaborative framework for improving health security in Africa. The Declaration directs these key players to submit a biennial report on the implementation of the regulations to the Assembly.

Ahead of the Assembly the Executive Council of the African Union endorsed the decision to allocate 0.5% of the AU annual operational budget to the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. The Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is working with partners to further strengthen International Health Regulations core capacities and improve health security in Africa.

For more information visit www.au.int

About the African Union

The African Union spearheads Africa’s development and integration in close collaboration with African Union Member States, the Regional Economic Communities and African citizens. AU Vision: to accelerate progress towards an integrated, prosperous and inclusive Africa, at peace with itself, playing a dynamic role in the continental and global arena, effectively driven by an accountable, efficient and responsive Commission.

AfSBT Step-Wise Accreditation Programme updates

Information provided by the AfSBT Accreditation Managers

♦ Conducted an Assessors Training Course – Anglophone, in Cape Town, South Africa, 3-5 July (2 participants from The Blood Transfusion Service of Namibia, 2 participants from the Western Province Blood Transfusion Service in South Africa, and 3 participants from the South African National Blood Service). Training was facilitated by Rob Wilkinson and Mohammed Farouk. Michael Qualls from CDC and Lesley Bust from AfSBT attended as observers.

♦ Recruitment of candidates for a second assessors training course - Anglophone to be conducted in Kigali, Rwanda end of September 2017.

♦ Continued revision of accreditation related documents based on latest updates of AfSBT standards.

♦ Updating assessors training curriculum.

♦ Accreditation committee meeting in Kigali, Rwanda (31 July to 1 August).

Assessors Training Group – Cape Town, South Africa
Uganda undergoes Progress Assessment

AfSBT Step-Wise Accreditation Programme aims at supporting blood services in Africa to scale up transfusion safety through certification (at Step 1 or Step 2) and Accreditation (at Step 3). The Society embarks on providing the necessary Technical Assistance in the form of education, training and mentoring of African Blood Transfusion Services. Through the programme, blood services provide a greater assurance that the quality of the services meets international standards. This in turn, gives confidence that the same level of service and safety is available throughout the area served by the organisation. The Uganda Blood Transfusion Services (UBTS) has therefore enrolled on the programme and is currently pursuing Step 2 Certification. In this regard, a Progress Assessment was conducted at UBTS headquarters/ Nakasero blood bank in Kampala from 17 to 21 July 2017. Dr Gatare Swaibu, AfSBT Education Manager for Anglophone countries, led the Progress Assessment and was supported by AfSBT Educators; Olivier Ndahirwe and Patrick Lumumba.

All the core functions of UBTS were assessed during this mission based on AfSBT standards, including the following: mobilization, recruitment, selection and screening of blood donors; collection of blood and processing donated blood into blood products; testing for blood grouping and transfusion transmissible infectious diseases; handling, transportation and storage plus distribution of blood and blood products to hospital blood banks.

AfSBT Educators pose for a group photo with UBTS Staff after the assessment exercise
Upcoming events

**SA National Blood Transfusion Congress**: 28-31 August, Sun City; [www.sabloodcongress.org](http://www.sabloodcongress.org)
See accompanying attachments on AfSBT participation in this Congress


The National Center of Blood Transfusion and Hematology, in partnership with the Moroccan Society of Blood Transfusion, organizes the 11th Arab Blood Transfusion Congress: Marrakech 10-12 October 2017. Main theme: Ethics and Blood Safety - [http://www.smts.ma/](http://www.smts.ma/). The scientific conference, with the participation of researchers and specialists in various disciplines of blood transfusion from Arab countries and other countries of the world, aims to highlight the status of research and management in blood transfusion and to update research exchanges, and to promote the transfer of technological and managerial expertise. The programme plans to include plenary sessions, brief oral and poster communications, symposia and working meetings of committees. For further information and participation, email smtsmaroc@gmail.com


**Check the AfSBT website, at [www.afsbt.org](http://www.afsbt.org) for more news items and alerts**

Contact us

Use the email address: nyags18@gmail.com

- David Mvere: Managing Director
- Beryl Armstrong: Outgoing Editor, e-Newsletter
- Heidi Goubran: Incoming Editor, e-Newsletter
- Jean-Baptiste Tapko: French Editor
- Bright Mulenga: Website Officer
- Molly Gondwe: Administration Officer

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