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DONOR RIGHTS AND EXPECTATIONS

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Which donor rights enjoy international protection? A number of rights stemming from the international human rights instruments, incl. the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health (retained in the WHO Constitution) The rights are exercised without discrimination of any kind. The role of international implementing bodies: Example: WHA 28.72: urging all Member States to promote the development of national blood transfusion services based on voluntary non-remunerated blood donation! WHO: 'It is the responsibility of governments to ensure a safe and adequate supply of blood!' Legal differences between paid donation and non-remunerated donation:

Non-remuneration can be an effective barrier to avoid unethical trade.

Non-remunerated donation: When blood is a non-remunerated gift, no individual has the right to give blood. But no-one should be discriminated against. The patient's right to safe blood competes with the donor's right not to be discriminated against. But the blood system is made to help the patient, not to help the donor.

Voluntary donation: If blood donation is not voluntary, it is a clear breach of the right of 'respect of person', e.g. blood taken from prisoners, soldiers or from medical staff, family donations and replacement donations. The right to development and the right to education also apply to blood donors! The right to information is essential.

General solutions to avoid breaches of donor's rights: Having a large panel of donors, so that you can be highly critical when selecting donors - but on a strictly scientific basis. All nations should have a blood law - and insurance against accidents. Information about abnormal test results must be guaranteed. There should be confidentiality of data. But traceability is a must. Donors should be represented by donor organizations.

Donor expectations: Know your donors and their expectations. Make donor surveys. Direct personal contact is essential when recruiting new donors. Volunteers have a key role in blood donor recruitment and retention. What brings the donor back to the blood bank? Donors must feel that they are an important part of the national blood supply. The national blood system should function well, also when the donor needs blood. Accreditation and transparency ensure trust in the safety of products and in sufficiency of supply. All blood must be tested. Any relevant abnormal findings should be reported to the donor.

Donors take pride in national self-sufficiency: Information is the key incentive. Funds for information, recruitment and retention are best administered by voluntary organizations. Blood donors expect good quality and efficiency in blood services

The reputation of the blood system is everything: There must not be any waste and out-dating must be minimal. Donors expect to be serviced by trained medical professionals. Donors should be acknowledged continuously. Donors expect their associations and the blood centers to be visible. Have an offensive media strategy. Appeal especially to young people. Establish a group of young ambassadors or a CLUB 25. Ethics are important to donors. The government and the national donor association should agree on guidelines.