

**SPEAKING NOTES FOR  
THE HONOURABLE, DR. RISHAD SEECHERAN  
MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH**

**ANNUAL SEWA TT 6K FUN RUN**

**DIVALI NAGAR**

**SUNDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2025**

**7:00 A.M.**

It is my pleasure to stand with you all this morning at the Annual Walkathon hosted by SEWA International TT. Together we are actively bringing public awareness to the lifesaving act of blood donation. To this, I say 'Share Life. Give Blood!' I commend the team for continuing to be leaders in voluntary service. By donating blood, volunteers give a resource that is needed in emergencies, and there's no personal gain to be had, except for providing a resource that is indispensable in emergency medical situations.

This dedication aligns perfectly with the Ministry of Health's mission to promote our Voluntary Non-Remunerated Blood Donation (VNRBD) system right here in Trinidad and Tobago. The aim of the Ministry of Health is to acclimatise the public to this unique system of blood donation. The core of this system, promotes acts of altruism over compensation. We are reminding the public that regular blood donation isn't just about saving lives, it is about developing and maintaining a healthy supply for the best delivery of care. We are educating everyone on how blood donation can bring about prolonged life and help ensure that the health and wellbeing outcomes for all of society, are drastically improved.

The Ministry is focusing on promoting targeted communication via multiple channels on the importance of having a consistent blood supply, the benefits of donating blood, where donations can be done and to encourage persons to voluntarily donate without the expectation of remuneration.

But donating blood is only part of the larger picture that we are piecing together in health. Prevention of disease is the first line of defence against chronic diseases. That is why an active lifestyle, as we are engaging in this morning, is so needed and welcomed.

Regular physical activity helps prevent and manage cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, certain cancers, hypertension, and even depression. Making time each week for exercise, whether it's walking, cycling with your kids, or strength training, can reduce the risks we face of lifestyle diseases.

When we join an active lifestyle with blood donation, we directly support our healthcare system by improving donor health. Exercise boosts circulation, strengthens the heart, regulates blood pressure, and balances cholesterol and blood sugar levels. Also, donating blood helps maintain healthy iron levels, reduces oxidative stress, and can even serve as somewhat of a health check-up for donors.

Finally, community events like this walkathon embody the spirit of health promotion through action. Let us walk together, toward wellness, toward the prevention of chronic diseases and toward a blood donation system that is well serviced by the people.

I thank you.