



May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011

News Editors,

## INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS WEEK: UGANDA RED CROSS SALUTES OVER 250, 000 VOLUNTEERS IN UGANDA

**Kampala:** As the World celebrates the International Red Cross Red Crescent Week (1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> May, 2011), Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) salutes its over 250, 000 volunteers for their exemplary service. Without the Red Cross' active volunteers, URCS would not be able to help and save lives of millions of Ugandans who need our assistance every year.

Addressing journalists on the Red Cross Red Crescent celebrations in Uganda at their National headquarter on Lumumba Avenue in Kampala, URCS' Secretary General Michael Richard Nataka said all its interventions and work countrywide is done by volunteers with the support of 172 paid staff. This year's theme is "**Promoting volunteerism for sustainable development.**" The main celebrations in Uganda will take place on 8<sup>th</sup> May at Independence Park, Mbarara.

With the various humanitarian needs in the country, volunteers from Uganda Red Cross Society are always among the first to respond. From rescuing the sick and wounded to providing first aid, water and food to those in need, distributing seeds to famine stricken families, mobilizing communities to adopt proper hygiene, mobilization for blood donation, responding to natural and man-made disasters, sensitizing communities on HIV/AIDS prevention, promoting safe motherhood, tracing missing people, URCS volunteers have been putting community first for more than 40 years.

"When so many need some-one who cares, someone to rescue and assist them, URCS volunteers will always be there. The heroic deeds of the URCS volunteers who adhered to varying situations to save lives of others is evidence of the Red Cross fulfilling its commitment to its allotted mandate of serving Humanity," Nataka added.

This year's celebrations are an opportunity for the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement globally to promote and recognize the role volunteers have played in enabling the Red Cross family become the largest humanitarian network in the world.

"It is worth pointing out that volunteers are often themselves the victims of the very same crises they respond to. The courage and sense of solidarity it takes to put one's own suffering aside and take action to help others is quite remarkable," Nataka observed.

He noted that the Red Cross volunteers do not only respond to emergencies but also engage communities in the spirit of togetherness. The Secretary General emphasized that URCS' commitment is to work with the Government of Uganda and partners to better protect, promote and recognize the critical role our volunteers play, often in the face of great personal sacrifice.

He related the sacrifice volunteers go through to their recent commitment to save lives of 431 people who were injured in the Walk to Work demonstrations that kicked off on April 11, 2011. 286 people were referred while 145 received on site first aid services from the R.C Action Teams.

Other activities during the week include a photo and information, education and communication materials exhibition highlighting URCS volunteers in action throughout the different interventions across the countrywide, football gala, award of volunteers and launch of new membership categories

**Ends**

**For details contact:**

Catherine Ntabadde-Assistant Director, Communications 0776-312015

Michael Richard Nataka-Secretary General 0776-312001