



KRB Update #2201 – Madagascar

Keith R. Brinkman with Mercy Ships

15 September 2014

hear more from me over the upcoming weeks. "Misaotra tompoko" Thank you.
Lahimatoa Keith

--Press Release--

Las Palmas, Grand Canaria (PRWEB) September 15, 2014

Mercy Ships announced this week that they have accepted the invitation from of the President of the Republic of Madagascar, His Excellency Hery Rajaonarimampianina, to bring the world's largest civilian hospital ship to Madagascar for its next field service until middle of 2015.

"We are honored to be able to come alongside the island nation of Madagascar and their government's effort to strengthen their healthcare infrastructure through the training and capacity building Mercy Ships offers, free of charge. Thousands of patients are suffering from pathologies which the specialists on the Mercy Ship are equipped to assist through the surgical expertise of our dedicated professionals." stated Mercy Ships President and Founder, Don Stephens.

The hospital ship's Managing Director, Roland Decorvet from Switzerland, completed the discussions with representatives of the Prime Minister and Minister of Public Health, Mr. Kolo Roger, securing the necessary agreements following an invitation from the President of the world's fourth largest island nation. The Mercy Ship is expected to sail from the Canary Islands by mid-September with a stopover in Cape Town, South Africa, at the end of the month for refueling and crewing. Anticipated arrival into Tamatave, Madagascar, is by the end of October.

The Mercy Ship is equipped with five state-of-the-art operating rooms and is a fully modern hospital specializing in maxillofacial, reconstructive, plastics, orthopaedic, ophthalmic, dental and obstetric fistula surgeries. Doctors onboard anticipate operating on thousands of patients during the 16,500-ton hospital ship's stay of several months in port. The surgeries and care are provided at no cost to the Malagasy people, and the focus of care is on the population which have very little or no access to specialized surgical healthcare.

Madagascar is located off the southeastern coast of Africa. More than 43% of its more than 22 million inhabitants are under the age of 20, and the nation is positioned 151 out of 187 countries in the U.N. Human Development Index. A protracted political crisis in recent years has endangered the nation's ability to meet a number of millennium development goals and has taken a heavy toll on Madagascar's economy and people, especially the most vulnerable.

According to the President's office, there is a clear and important need for the expertise that Mercy Ships can bring to the nation, both in terms of specialized operations as well as in education and capacity building alongside Malagasy professionals working in medical care and surgical need. Mercy Ships will work closely with the Government of Madagascar to evaluate the exact needs, pathologies, and regional priorities, according to the government spokesperson.

Donovan Palmer, Mercy Ships Group Managing Director, added, "While we had been looking at the possibility of coming to Madagascar, we have decided to come earlier and to postpone our plans with Guinea and Benin due to the Ebola crisis in the West Africa region."

The Mercy Ship is a specialized surgical ship with multi-bed wards and limited isolation facilities. With a crew of more than 400 from around 40 nations, including families with small children, the Mercy Ship is not designed to quarantine Ebola patients, stated Palmer.

Mercy Ships uses hospital ships to deliver free, world-class healthcare services, capacity building and sustainable development to those without access in the developing world. Founded in 1978 by Don and Deyon Stephens, Mercy Ships has worked in more than 70 countries providing services valued at more than \$ 1 billion, treating more than 2.5 million direct beneficiaries. Each year Mercy Ships has more than 1,600 volunteers from more than 40 nations. Professionals including surgeons, dentists, nurses, healthcare trainers, teachers, cooks, seamen, engineers and agriculturalists donate their time and skills to the effort. Mercy Ships seeks to transform individuals and serve nations one at a time.

The last visit of a Mercy Ship to Madagascar was in 1996.

--End of Press Release--

Serving Together, *Keith*

Email: keith.brinkman@yahoo.com

krb@keithbrinkman.com

www.KeithBrinkman.com