



ANNUAL REPORT 2025





2025 Annual Report

Table of Contents

About Us	1	Local Support in Action: Laos	10
Message From the President	2	Regional Support in Action	13
2025 Highlights	3	Global Support in Action	18
Governance	5	Strengthening Blood Services in Disasters	21
GAP Membership	7	Collaboration Through Exchange	22
Our Support in Action	9	Finance	24



About Us

The Global Advisory Panel on Corporate Governance and Risk Management of Blood Services in Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (GAP) is a global network of blood programme experts.

We provide strategic advice and practical support to Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies to strengthen corporate governance and risk management in blood services.

GAP is affiliated with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and our work reflects the responsibilities and commitments set out in the IFRC Blood Policy.



Our Vision and Mission

We envision Red Cross and Red Crescent blood programmes that are **safe, well-governed, and resilient**, grounded in the principle of voluntary non-remunerated blood donation for the benefit of patients and the protection of donors.

To achieve this vision, GAP supports Red Cross and Red Crescent blood services by strengthening risk management and corporate governance, promoting good practice, and facilitating the exchange of knowledge across our global network.

Message from the President

I am encouraged by the commitment shown across our membership and confident in GAP's ability to continue adding value in an increasingly challenging global environment.

The past year demonstrated the importance of collaboration across the GAP member network. In my first year as President, I have seen firsthand how shared technical expertise and operational experience continue to underpin GAP's role in supporting safe and sustainable blood programmes.

GAP's strength lies in the diversity of specialist knowledge and practical experience contributed by its members. This was evident in 2025 through collaborative technical input and advisory support, peer engagement, and contributions to global guidance and standards. These efforts reflect GAP's unique role as a technical reference centre for Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and as a credible contributor within the international blood community.

In 2025, our focus remained firmly on governance, risk management, and resilience. This work is increasingly important as blood services face growing pressures from rising demand, supply chain constraints, more frequent emergencies, and the impacts of climate-related disruption.

Strengthening donor systems remains essential to long-term resilience. During the year, GAP advanced this work through the release of practical resources, including the Incentivisation Guide, the Storytelling Toolkit, and guidance supporting the transition from family replacement donation to voluntary non-remunerated blood donation.

A significant achievement was GAP's contribution to global standards and advocacy. GAP's input to the second edition of the AABB Fundamental Standards, highlighting challenges in resource-limited settings, was reflected in the final version, strengthening their global relevance and practical applicability.

Looking ahead, the need for resilient and well-governed blood systems will continue to grow. GAP is well placed to support this work through shared expertise and continued collaboration with partners. I sincerely thank GAP members for their ongoing commitment and engagement.



Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dr Cheuk Kwong Lee'.

Dr Cheuk Kwong Lee
GAP President

2025 At a Glance



Membership Eligibility Expanded

GAP broadened its membership framework to enable **Category A2 and B National Societies** to join, strengthening inclusivity and supporting future engagement across the network.



VNRBD Resources Launched

A suite of resources including the **Incentivisation Guide** and **Storytelling Toolkit** was developed and released, supporting voluntary non-remunerated blood donation.



Country Based Support

In-country specialist advisory and technical support delivered to two National Society blood programmes in the Asia-Pacific, including training, a clinical workshop, and site visits at central, regional and district levels.



Standards and Advocacy

GAP's feedback on the **AABB Fundamental Standards (2nd Edition)** improved their relevance and applicability for resource-limited settings and was reflected in the final version, informing ongoing implementation support in contexts such as Laos.



Leadership Transition

Dr Cheuk Kwong Lee assumed the role of GAP President on 1 January 2025, with Prof. Philippe Vandekerckhove recognised as **President Emeritus** for 12 years of leadership and ongoing contribution. Dr Elizabeth Vinelli joined the Executive Board on 1 March 2025.



Global Engagement

The **2025 GAP AGM in Hong Kong** and member participation in the **ISBT Congress in Perth** provided an opportunity for in-person member collaboration, technical exchange and shared learning.

12

Technical advice and knowledge
exchange requests supported

11

Self-Assessments Completed

4

Regional Thematic Training
Sessions Delivered



Governance

GAP's **Executive Board** provides strategic leadership and oversight.



President

Dr Cheuk Kwong Lee

Hong Kong Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service



Vice President

Prof Wolfgang Mayr

Austrian Red Cross Blood Service



Permanent Board Member

Dr Soraya Amar El Dusouqui

Transfusion Swiss Red Cross



Board Member

Dr Elizabeth Vinelli

Honduran Red Cross National Blood Centre



IFRC Observer

Dr Petra Khoury

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
Health and Care Department

Governance

GAP's **Regional Coordinators** provide regional network connection and identify opportunities for assistance and collaboration.



**Asia
Pacific**

Adj Prof Stephen Cornelissen
Australian Red Cross Lifeblood



Americas

Dr Elizabeth Vinelli
Honduran Red Cross National Blood
Centre



**Europe &
Central
Asia**

Prof Wolfgang Mayr
Austrian Red Cross Blood Service

GAP Membership

Americas

USA
Mr Chris Hrouda

Honduras
Dr Elizabeth Vinelli

El Salvador
To be advised

Europe & Central Asia

Austria
Prof Wolfgang Mayr

Belgium
Prof Philippe Vandekerckhove

Germany
Prof Torsten Tonn

Israel
Prof Eilat Shinar

Finland
Dr Jarkko Ihalainen

Switzerland
Dr Soraya Amar El Dusouqui

Turkiye
Dr Murat Ozturk

Asia Pacific

Australia
Adj Prof Stephen Cornelissen

Hong Kong (China)
Dr Cheuk Kwong Lee

Japan
Dr Hirokazu Tsuno

Laos
Dr Chanthala Souksakhone

Republic of Korea
Dr So-Yong Kwon



KENYA RED CROSS



ACTION TEAM

regular donors
save LIVES!

Our Support in Action

GAP is the primary organisation dedicated to supporting Red Cross / Red Crescent blood programmes in strengthening governance and risk management.

We bring together diverse expertise and experience, and facilitate the exchange of knowledge from regional and global networks to help support local blood services.

Our support includes tailored technical advice, training and capacity-building programmes. We also provide access to tools and resources on quality, safety and sustainability of national blood systems. Through its initiatives, GAP provides practical, targeted support to promote safe Voluntary Non-Remunerated Blood Donation practices, in accordance with the IFRC Blood Policy.

Central to GAP's work is a commitment to building resilience in blood programmes. By strengthening governance, risk management, and organisational preparedness, GAP supports blood services to adapt to changing environments and respond effectively to emerging challenges and disasters, ensuring continuity of a safe and sustainable blood supply.



Local

- Self-Assessment
- Accreditation preparedness
- Technical guidance
- Disaster recovery



Regional

- Modular training
- Peer-to-peer support
- Network collaboration



Global

- Technical expertise
- Materials, tools and resources
- Communication and advocacy

Local Support in Action: Laos

Strengthening quality systems in Laos through technical collaboration

Throughout 2025, GAP provided technical and strategic support to the Lao Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service (LRCBTS). This collaboration built on the earlier progress achieved with GAP support at the National Blood Transfusion Institute to attain AABB Quality Certification in 2024, and supported continued development across national and provincial levels.

GAP's engagement in Laos reflects a shared commitment to strengthening governance, quality systems, and transfusion safety through practical, locally appropriate approaches. By working alongside national leadership and provincial teams, GAP supported sustained progress grounded in local capacity and priorities.

This approach highlights the value of long-term technical collaboration in embedding international standards and strengthening resilient blood systems.



Above: GAP and Lao Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service representatives working together to strengthen transfusion services during 2025.

2025 focus areas in Laos

- Quality systems and standards implementation
- Provincial capacity-building
- Transfusion safety and clinical coordination
- Sustainability planning

Local Support in Action: Laos



International standards adoption at the provincial level

Standards implementation

- Three provincial sites engaged: Vientiane Province, Luang Prabang, Sayaboury
- Target pathway: Provincial quality certification by 2028
- Structured gap analyses completed against core requirements

Quality system elements addressed

- Quality control testing and reagent management
- Equipment qualification and maintenance
- Training, competency, SOPs and documentation systems



Transfusion safety and clinical engagement

- Guidance and planning support for introduction of routine red cell antibody screening
- Staged technical proposal developed (screening → identification capability)
- Clinical workshop delivered on:
 - Component therapy
 - Massive transfusion protocols
 - Focus on obstetric emergencies and clinician–laboratory coordination



Foundations for sustainability

- Priorities identified with blood service leadership
- Ongoing mentoring and follow-up support planned

What this support enables

- Safer transfusion practices
- More consistent quality systems
- Improved emergency preparedness
- Stronger organisational resilience



△注意
このバッグは、
医療用として
使用してください。
誤用は危険です。

100-1117-01-1
DATE: 2018-07-01
LOT: 180701
KUBOTA

Regional Support in Action

Self-Assessment as a foundation for targeted support



The GAP Self-Assessment (SA) programme is a core regional mechanism for strengthening corporate governance and risk management in National Society blood services, in line with the IFRC Blood Policy. The programme supports National Societies to identify strengths, gaps, and emerging risks associated with their involvement in blood programmes, while providing GAP with a structured evidence base for regional priority-setting and follow-up support.

In 2025, the Self-Assessment programme was conducted in the Europe and Central Asia region. The SA questionnaire was distributed to all 16 Category A* National Society blood services in the region (11 Category A1 and five Category A2).

By the end of the reporting period:

- 11 National Society blood services had completed the Self-Assessment
- 11 individual feedback reports were issued, providing tailored, country-specific recommendations to support governance and risk management improvement.

In parallel to the individual analysis and reporting, a whole of region analysis was undertaken in collaboration with the Regional Coordinator to identify common challenges and emerging risk areas. These findings enable GAP to monitor trends, highlight potential risks, and ensure that support is targeted where it is most needed.

* Category A includes:
A1: Provision of a full blood service
A2: Provision of donor recruitment and retention activities, including donor interviews, blood collection, and / or post-donation counselling.

Regional Support in Action

What regional support included



From Self-Assessment to regional priorities

- Self-Assessment findings informed regional priorities in Europe and Central Asia
- Common governance challenges identified to guide future guidance and support



Regional thematic support

- Americas regional thematic support programme completed
- Workshops delivered on:
 - Governance
 - Haemovigilance
 - Technical Governance Committees



From assessment to practical action

- Guidance focused on strengthening government and hospital agreements
- Practical resources developed for wider regional use

What this approach enables

- Clear regional visibility of governance and risk trends
- Targeted, needs-based regional training and guidance
- Stronger governance and risk management across regions
- More resilient and sustainable blood services

Regional Support in Action

Supporting Voluntary Non-Remunerated Blood Donation in the Pacific

In 2025, GAP targeted its support for Voluntary Non-Remunerated Blood Donation (VNRBD) across the Pacific region, responding to persistent challenges in donor recruitment, retention, and community awareness.

Support focused on advocacy, technical guidance, and provision of practical resources to assist National Societies in progressing from family replacement donation toward more sustainable voluntary donation models.

The Pacific region was prioritised due to the central role National Societies play in blood donor recruitment and retention. In many Pacific Island countries, National Societies lead frontline donor mobilisation and community engagement, often without access to dedicated donor recruitment resources. Changing donor behaviours and increasing pressure on health systems have contributed to continued reliance on family replacement donation in several contexts. Combined with the small scale of many national programmes, these factors limit access to specialised technical support and reinforce the need for targeted regional assistance.

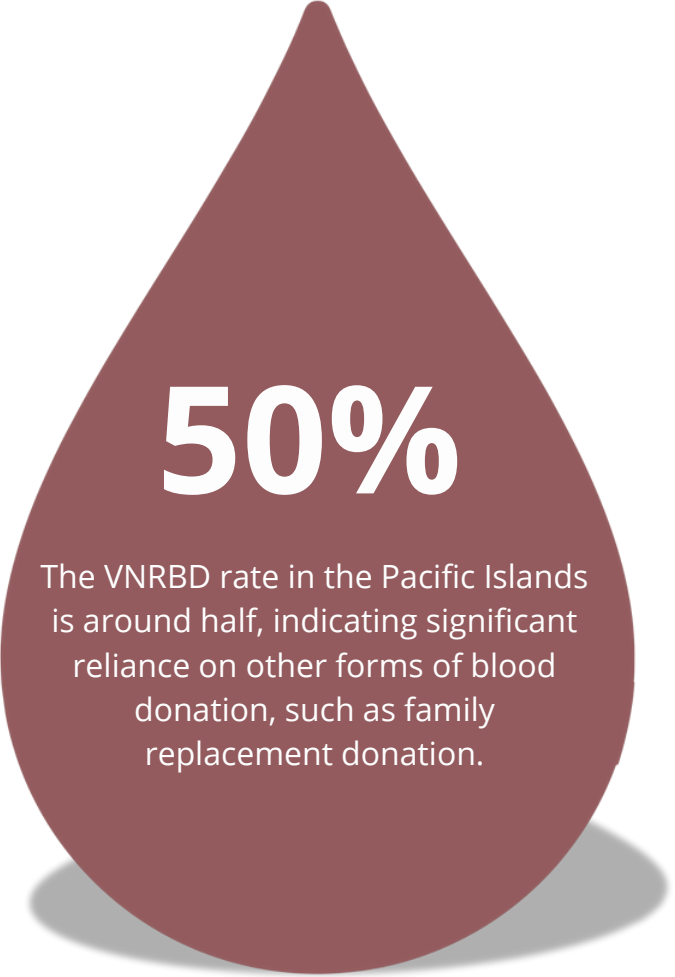
As part of this engagement, GAP worked with the IFRC Pacific Health Network to promote good practice and regional collaboration.

Low levels of voluntary blood donation persist across many Pacific Island countries.

National Societies remain the **primary actors** in donor recruitment and retention, often operating without dedicated technical resources.

Regional Support in Action

Supporting Voluntary Non-Remunerated Blood Donation in the Pacific



50%

The VNRBD rate in the Pacific Islands is around half, indicating significant reliance on other forms of blood donation, such as family replacement donation.

In April 2025, GAP presented to the Pacific Health Network, highlighting strategies to engage existing family replacement donors and support their transition to repeat voluntary donors. The focus was on practical, context-appropriate approaches that could be adapted to diverse national settings.

GAP provided targeted VNRBD support across the Pacific, including direct country engagement with Kiribati to strengthen donor engagement, improve community awareness, and address operational challenges affecting donor recruitment and retention. Context-specific guidance was provided on VNRBD policy and practice, including advice on ethical donor incentive approaches consistent with voluntary donation principles.

Throughout the year GAP provided ongoing advice and resources to support Pacific National Societies and IFRC colleagues. This included training outlines, adaptable educational materials, and guidance to strengthen volunteer engagement and community outreach.

Support was designed to be flexible and responsive to the realities of Pacific Island contexts, where programmes often operate with limited resourcing and capacity. By tailoring support to these regional-specific constraints, GAP sought to reinforce ethical, sustainable approaches to blood donation and strengthen regional VNRBD programmes.



Global Support in Action

Network collaboration and knowledge exchange

GAP recognises the value of collaboration and plays an active role in facilitating knowledge sharing and information exchange across the global Red Cross and Red Crescent network and GAP member community.

Throughout 2025, GAP shared information on emerging industry guidance and technical developments, supported by specialist review by GAP's Technical Advisory Group to ensure their relevance and practical applicability for National Societies.

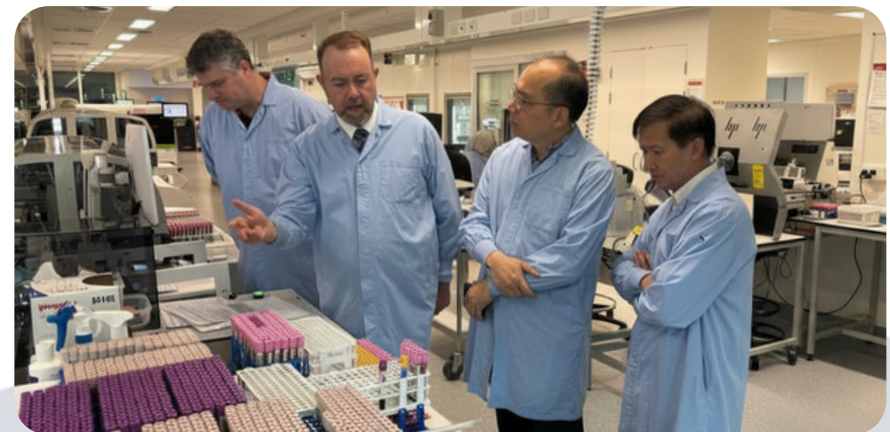
In response to specific requests, GAP coordinated targeted exchanges and connections across the network on a range of technical and operational priorities, for example:

- enquiries on blood service disaster preparedness and business continuity planning
- requests for guidance on blood donor management practices and supporting systems
- requests to connect National Societies with peers and partners regarding equipment or capability needs through GAP's established global and regional networks.

Following the ISBT Congress held in Perth in October, GAP also supported international colleagues and partners seeking to deepen practical understanding of blood service operations by coordinating visits to the Australian Red Cross Lifeblood processing centre in Perth, enabling valuable peer-to-peer learning and exchange.

Through the coordination of these requests, exchanges and learning opportunities, GAP continues to strengthen connections, support shared problem-solving, and contribute to a well-connected, informed and resilient global community of Red Cross and Red Crescent blood services.

Below: Lifeblood staff and GAP members Dr Cheuk Kwong Lee (Hong Kong) and Dr Chanthala Souksakhone (Laos) touring the Lifeblood processing centre in Perth.



Global Support in Action

Providing specialist advice in a complex humanitarian context

During the year, GAP was requested by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to provide specialist technical and governance expertise to support a National Society blood service operating in a highly challenging environment.



Above: GAP member representatives Dr Elizabeth Vinelli and Dr Soraya Amar El Dusouqui providing specialist in-country blood programme advisory support.

In response, GAP mobilised senior technical experts to undertake an independent, in-country assessment. This provided an evidence-based evaluation of governance, operations and key risks, and informed practical recommendations supported by a prioritised action plan.

GAP's role extended beyond the assessment, with ongoing advisory support provided to both IFRC and the National Society.

This support reflects GAP's commitment to providing independent, expert advice when requested, supporting IFRC and National Societies to address complex risks while prioritising safety, accountability, and long-term sustainability of vital blood services.



Collection Date 01KJ 96395 EXPIRES 02/10/10

AS-1 RED BLOOD CELLS
ADENINE-SALINE ADDED
LEUKOCYTES REDUCED

455 mg Sodium Added 04710

Expt 500 mL
CPD Whole Blood
Store at 15°C

See container of information for
indications, contraindications,
cautions, and methods of infusion.

VOLUNTEER DONOR

This product may contain infectious agents.

PROPERLY IDENTIFY INTENDED RECIPIENT

0
Rh POSITIVE

THE AMERICAN NATIONAL RED CROSS
Washington, DC 20006
U.S. License #190

Collected and Processed by
American Red Cross Blood Services
New York-Penn Region
West Henrietta, NY 14586

1373022

FM09K04019

2FE4R3307E

Strengthening Blood Services in Disasters

Ensuring continuity of blood services in emergencies

In 2025, GAP supported disaster and emergency readiness for blood services across the Red Cross and Red Crescent network through two complementary areas of engagement: **strategic technical expertise** and **practical, network-enabled support**.

Emergency Response guidance

GAP members contributed technical expertise to the review and finalisation of the IFRC Guidance on Blood Management for Emergency Response Unit (ERU) Emergency Hospitals. This input helped ensure that the guidance reflected blood service operational realities and could be applied effectively in emergency contexts.



Image Credit: IFRC shaRED

Practical preparedness and network-based support

Alongside strategic work, GAP provided practical support to strengthen preparedness and respond to emerging needs through its global network.

Following the December 2024 earthquake in **Vanuatu**, GAP worked with Vanuatu Red Cross to understand impacts on blood donor activities. While no direct recovery assistance was required for the National Society, GAP facilitated rapid connections within its network to help address urgent blood service equipment needs identified by the Ministry of Health. This demonstrated the value of GAP's established regional and global relationships in enabling critical and timely support.

To further strengthen preparedness, GAP also developed a **high-level disaster preparedness checklist** to support National Society blood services, particularly those without established business continuity plans. The checklist provides a practical foundation for future capacity-building and resource development.

Collaboration Through Exchange

GAP Annual General Meeting and Technical Visits | Hong Kong 2025

The 2025 GAP Annual General Meeting was hosted by Hong Kong Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service, with members attending both in person and remotely. The programme centred around technical exchange and site visits which provided valuable insights into the organisation, delivery and challenges of blood services in dense urban settings.

A technical tour of the blood service provided members with an overview of the facilities and operations of the Hong Kong model of blood service delivery and valuable peer exchange. The tour included the humanitarian centre, Hong Kong Red Cross headquarters, mobile first aid, training facilities, and the logistics and disaster relief material handling centres. Members also visited the International Relief Service warehouse, gaining insight into regional and global humanitarian supply operations.



Left: Former GAP President Philippe Vandekerckhove and current GAP President Cheuk Kwong Lee

The visit provided valuable insight into the organisation and delivery of blood services in a dense urban setting, and supported peer exchange on operational models, preparedness, and quality systems.

A highlight of the meeting was the formal recognition of Professor Philippe Vandekerckhove for his outstanding leadership and service as GAP President from 2013 to 2024, with members conferring the title of President Emeritus in acknowledgement of his longstanding contribution to GAP.

Below: Left to right - Shigeki Miyata, Michelle Wsolak, Hirokazu Tsuno, Stephen Cornelissen, Philippe Vandekerckhove, Elizabeth Vinelli, Cheuk Kwong Lee, Soraya Amar El Dusouqui, Torsten Tonn, Florine Fisette





Finance - Income and Expenditure

(all figures in AUD)

	Actual I&E 2025	2025 Budget
OPENING BALANCE - 1 JANUARY 2025	529,793	508,037
Income		
Membership fees	442,798	439,318
Bank interest*	32,732	2,000
Australian Red Cross Lifeblood Donation	85,000	85,000
Funds transfer from Swiss GAP account closure	152,090	0
Total Income	712,619	526,318
Expenditure		
Secretariat expenses	(262,091)	(294,829)
Insurance	(1,237)	(1,500)
Website hosting, technical maintenance and software	(1,032)	(2,000)
Specialist advice (including translation)	0	0
Annual General and stakeholder meetings	(7,117)	(25,000)
Bank fees	(66)	(200)
Investment fee and exchange rate gains / loss	(1,306)	0
Reserve	0	(50,000)
Funds transfer from Swiss GAP account closure	(151,945)	0
Country / regional support	(156,789)	(238,407)
Partner funded programs (VNRBD)	(13,600)	(93,735)
Total Expenditure	(595,184)	(705,671)
Surplus / (Deficit)	117,436	(179,353)
CLOSING BALANCE - 31 DECEMBER 2025	647,229	328,684
# ADJUSTED CLOSING BALANCE - 31 DECEMBER 2025	635,464	

Notes:

* Interest income exceeded budget as a result of favourable interest rate conditions and investment earnings.

Closing balance adjusted to account for preserved funds for external projects (awaiting advice from funders) of 11,765.

The GAP Income and Expenditure is aligned with the Australian Red Cross Lifeblood financial statements. The Lifeblood accounts are audited annually by external auditors.

Finance - Audit

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

Global Advisory Panel (GAP) on Corporate Governance and Risk Management of Blood Services in Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

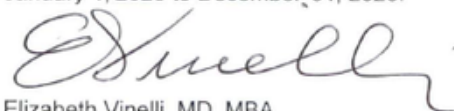
To ensure compliance with the Swiss Code of Obligations (as they apply to an association established under Swiss Law) which allows small organizations to appoint internal auditors without accounting expertise, I hereby present the report of the internal audit process conducted for the period from **January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025**. I believe that the evidence reviewed is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for this internal audit opinion.

The following activities have been conducted during the internal audit process:

- Review of the GAP Income and Expenditure Report for 2024, to ensure that closing balances for 2024 were correctly transferred to the opening balance for 2025,
- Review of the membership income as stated in the financial report,
- Review of interest generated in bank accounts,
- Review of the secretariat expenses for reasonableness, and
- Review of the expenses for meetings and for the support of priority countries for reasonableness,
- Review of partner founded programs

During the audit, all necessary information and explanations required have been obtained.

In my opinion, the detailed Report of Income and Expenditure for 2025 has been properly prepared and is a veritable reflection of the transactions that occurred during the period of January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025.



Elizabeth Vinelli, MD, MBA
Acting as Internal Auditor for GAP



Good governance, *safe blood*

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globaladvisorypanel.org

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