

World Blood Donor Day

“Celebrating the gift of blood” 14 JUNE 2009

Announcing World Blood Donor Day, 14 June 2009

On 14 June 2009, World Blood Donor Day (WBDD) will again be celebrated throughout the world to create wider awareness of the need for safe blood for transfusion and the importance of blood donation.

Above all it will be an occasion to thank blood donors and to acknowledge those volunteers who are responding to a world-wide increase in demand for donations of blood and blood components. Based on the experience gained from the celebration of International Blood Donor Day since 1995 and World Health Day 2000, which focussed on the theme of blood safety, the first World Blood Donor Day was held on 14 June 2004. These early initiatives and widespread interest led to the adoption of World Health Assembly resolution WHA58.13 in 2005, establishing WBDD as an annual event and calling for broad international support. The resolution also urged international organizations and agencies concerned with global blood safety to collaborate in promoting and supporting World Blood Donor Day.

World Blood Donor Day was thus designated as an annual event by the ministers of health of all WHO Member States at the World Health Assembly in 2005. Each year, the number of countries that organize WBDD events increases, with activities now being held in the majority of countries. High-level commitment and support by government leaders, royalty and celebrities, coupled with media campaigns and community-based activities, unite the world in a celebration of the selfless individuals who donate their blood to save the lives and improve the health of people whom they will never meet.

World Blood Donor Day focuses on the life-saving gift of voluntary donors whose donations are given purely for altruistic reasons. As more and more countries achieve the goal of 100 per cent voluntary non-remunerated blood donation — 54 countries in 2006, compared with 39 in 2002 — there is growing appreciation of the vital role of voluntary donors who donate blood on a regular basis. Not only are they the safest blood donors, they are also the foundation of sustainable national blood supplies that are sufficient to meet the needs of all patients requiring transfusion. Accompanying the increase in voluntary blood donors throughout the world is an increase in the number of countries which produce blood components, including red cells, platelets and plasma, to meet the specific requirements of patients.

In 2009, the global theme for World Blood Donor Day will therefore place a renewed emphasis on improving the safety and sufficiency of blood supplies through the achievement of **100 per cent voluntary non-remunerated donation** of blood and blood components. This very broad theme is designed to provide an opportunity for all countries to focus on specific challenges to be addressed and thus:

- Advocates that countries that have not yet achieved 100 per cent voluntary blood donation should refocus on innovative new approaches to community participation and youth involvement and develop national blood donor programmes in order to increase the number of voluntary blood donors, phase out family/replacement donation and eliminate paid donation.
- Calls on countries that have already achieved 100 per cent voluntary blood donation to intensify their efforts to increase the number of regular donors in order to maintain a stable pool of donors who will meet their country's requirements for blood and blood components at all times, in routine and emergency situations.

- Urges countries that are establishing or expanding blood component programmes to base these programmes on 100 per cent voluntary non-remunerated donation.
- Encourages countries that have developed mechanisms for the procurement of blood products to establish cooperation with other countries to secure adequate supplies of blood products based on voluntary donations: for example, on WBDD 2009, some countries may choose to focus on self-sufficiency through voluntary plasma donation.

World Blood Donor Day is jointly sponsored by four core agencies: the World Health Organization, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Federation of Blood Donor Organizations and the International Society of Blood Transfusion. Each year, these partner organizations identify a country to host a global WBDD event that provides a focus for an international media campaign to raise awareness of the critically important role of voluntary non-remunerated donors in national health care systems. The event is also designed to support blood transfusion services, blood donor organizations and other nongovernmental organizations in strengthening and expanding their voluntary blood donor programmes and to reinforce national and local campaigns.

The core agencies are pleased to announce that the global event on 14 June 2009 will be held in Australia, hosted by the Australian Government in close association with the Australian Red Cross and Australian Red Cross Blood Service. The WBDD celebration will take place during the Australian Year of the Blood Donor which aims to enhance awareness of the need for ongoing and increased blood donation as well as the recruitment of new donors.

The joint website of the core agencies (**www.wbdd.org**) and the WHO webpage (**www.who.int/worldblooddonorday**) will contain the World Blood Donor Day brochure and poster as well as additional resources, including the WBDD 2009 logotype and news about events. You are invited to contribute by sharing your ideas, resource materials and plans for activities at national and local levels through these websites.

Your involvement and support will help to ensure a wide impact for World Blood Donor Day 2009 and bring the world one step closer to 100 per cent voluntary non-remunerated donation. We wish you a successful, joyful Day.



<http://www.who.int/bloodsafety>



<http://www.ifrc.org/what/health/blood>



International Federation of
Blood Donor Organizations
<http://www.fiods.org>



International Society
of Blood Transfusion
<http://www.isbt-web.org>