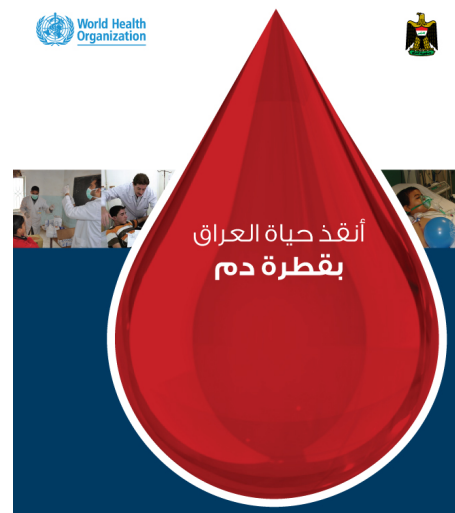


**Baghdad, 16 June 2011** – In Iraq, estimates have shown that 1 out of 10 people, who enter hospitals, need blood transfusion, and so far there is still a need for adequate facilities and equipment in order to ensure safe blood supply.



During the last decade, hospitals and health care centers all over war-torn-Iraq, were witnessing unprecedented blood and blood products shortage, due to the increased demands on blood products, the thing which resulted from the massive casualty numbers, in addition to standard patient's demand.

Taking into account this fact, the Government of Iraq (GOI), represented by the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the World Health Organization felt a pressing need to mobilize all efforts to set up a comprehensive national launching day on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 2011 to celebrate Blood Donation Day, which comes every year to highlight the contribution of voluntary unpaid blood donors make to public health.

This year's slogan is "New blood for the world," which aims to raise awareness of the role young people play in maintaining supplies of safe blood, since young people are the hope and future of a safe blood supply in the world.

The overall objective of the ceremony is to increase the capacity of Iraq health system to timely respond to different types of emergencies in order to reduce the number of avoidable loss of lives and minimize the negative impact of disabilities as a consequence of natural or manmade

disasters.

In this context, H.E the Minister of Health in Iraq, along with all acting parties in this ceremony realized that no tangible achievements can be made without the help of the people. Therefore, there has been a stressing need to develop a community base blood donation program through this ceremony that will help in promoting voluntary blood donation with the community, ensuring access to safe blood in a timely manner and ensuring sustained source of safe blood.

Following his H.E remarks, Dr Syed Jaffer Hussain, Representative of the WHO Iraq Office acknowledged that “The World Health Organization recommends that blood donation by at least 1% a country’s population is generally sufficient to meet a country’s basic requirements for safe blood,” adding that, “It’s important to see that in many countries a lot of young people are already giving blood. In fact, countries can use this to encourage more young people to become donors.”

Starting 16th of June 2011, a long programme of high-profile events will take place to celebrate voluntary blood donation, where a number of communities in Iraq will gather volunteers in a prominent public space to stand together as a part of their celebrations to achieve 100% of voluntary unpaid blood donation by 2020.

**Paint Iraq red in 2011 by showing support towards blood donors** Wednesday 1st of May  
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