Every year on 14 June, countries around the world celebrate World Blood Donor Day. The first World Blood Donor Day was observed in 2004, which was followed by its designation as an annual global event by the fifty-eighth World Health Assembly in 2005. World Blood Donor Day is now celebrated each year throughout the world to raise awareness of the importance of blood donation and to thank blood donors for their life saving contribution to help others in their community.
The date of 14 June is the birthday of Karl Landsteiner (1868–1943), an Austrian biologist and physician, considered to be the “founder” of modern blood transfusion. Landsteiner discovered the ABO blood groups in 1901, developed the modern system of classification of blood groups, and identified, in 1937, together with Alexander S. Wiener, the Rhesus factor, thus enabling physicians to transfuse blood without endangering a patient’s life.

The theme of this year’s campaign is “Safe blood saves lives with the slogan “Give blood and make the world a healthier place.” The campaign focuses on the contribution each blood donor can make to improve health for others in their community, especially during public emergencies and outbreaks.

Although the need for safe blood is universal, timely access remains inadequate in most low- and middle-income countries in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region, especially during emergencies. That includes the current COVID-19 pandemic. Across the region, regular donations by voluntary and unpaid blood donors is essential to meets the needs of patients and communities, at all times.

The campaign is also a call for action to all governments, national health authorities and national blood services to improve access to blood as part of universal health coverage. Through the campaign, we call on all countries in the Region to celebrate and thank individuals who donate blood, and to encourage those who have not yet donated blood to start donating, to make access to safe blood a reality for everyone in need, especially during public emergencies and outbreaks.

Related links

World Blood Donor Day campaign page

WHO Regional Director's message on World Blood Donor Day 2020 | Safe Blood Saves Lives

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