

4 June 2012 - This week, the World Health Organization and its partners celebrate the World Blood Donor's Day. The theme is "Every Blood Donor is a hero".

The WBDD is being commemorated this year while the phenomenon of blood supplies shortage in hospitals and clinics is increasing out of 80 countries where blood donation rates are less than 10 donations to every 1000 people, 79 are developing countries.

The WBDD aims at encouraging more people to donate blood, and identify the methods that should be followed by Health Systems and Policy makers to make blood transfusion safer and available to all the world's population.

The transfusion of blood and blood products helps save millions of lives every year. It can help improve life expectancy and the quality of life for patients suffering from life-threatening conditions, and supports complex medical and surgical procedures. In many countries, demand outstrips supply, and blood services face the challenge of making sufficient blood available, while also ensuring its quality and safety. Today, in 62 countries, national blood supplies are based on 100 % (or more than 99.9%) voluntary unpaid blood donation. However, 40 countries still depend on family donors and even paid donors and collect less than 25 % of their blood supplies from voluntary unpaid blood donors. The goal of the World Health Organization (WHO) is for all countries to obtain their blood supplies entirely from voluntary unpaid donors by 2020.

The blood donations worldwide is around 92 million provided annually by unknown heroes who save lives every day, through their voluntary unpaid and regular donations.

In the Eastern Mediterranean Region, the WHO Regional office commemorates the event on Monday 11 June 2012 through a blood drive for EMRO staff to donate blood the National Centre for blood transfusion services will run the blood drive that aims at setting an example and roll modeling of donation. Parallel to this, a ceremonial event will be held in Kuwait Conference hall in WHO premises. Dr Ala Alwan, WHO Regional Director will inaugurate the event and honor blood donors.

The theme of the 2012 World Blood Donor Day campaign, "Every blood donor is a hero"

focuses on the idea that every one of us can become a hero by giving blood. While recognizing the silent and unsung heroes who save lives every day through their blood donations, the theme also strongly encourages more people all over the world to donate blood voluntarily and regularly.

The objectives of this year's campaign are to:

Thank and reinforce the self-esteem of those who give blood so they continue to do so regularly

Inspire those who do not give blood but are in good health to start donating blood

Encourage blood service staff to recognize blood donors for their "heroic" act each and every time they donate blood; and

Persuade ministries of health to show their appreciation of blood donors and provide adequate resources to move towards 100% voluntary unpaid blood donation.

Blood is a substance that cannot be stored for long time. There is a continuous need for regular supplies of blood. It is important to urge sufficient number of healthy people to donate their blood regularly to insure enough quantities of safe blood.

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