



# World Health Organization

## Press Release:

### **World Blood Donor Day: Celebrating the gift of blood**

The Federal Ministry of Health of the Republic of Sudan and Ministry of Health of Gedarif State in collaboration with World Health Organization celebrated World Blood Donor Day on June 14, 2009 to pay tribute to voluntary blood donors who give a precious gift freely and without any reward to people they will never meet. The day is dedicated to salute these everyday unsung heroes, who want to help their fellow citizens. The celebration took place in Gedarif State in the presence of Her Excellency the Federal Minister of Health, Dr Shokai Tabita; Dr Mohamed Abdur Rab, WHO Representative in Sudan and other federal and state officials.

Overwhelming majority of the world's population including majority of the population of Sudan does not have access to safe blood without which many patients would die as there is no artificial substitute for blood. Currently close to 200,000 units of blood are collected each year nationally; of which only 15% is collected from voluntary blood donors. World Health Organization Representative, Dr. Mohammad Abdur Rab stressed the need to mobilize many more donors in order to: "Achieve the target of 100 percent voluntary blood donation as voluntary, unpaid donors are the foundation of a safe blood supply". He called all partners to: "Intensify their effort to spread the lifesaving message that any healthy person can be a donor".

World Blood Donor Day is coordinated and sponsored by an alliance of organizations involved in blood transfusion medicine and blood service delivery: 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. The day has also particular significance: 14 June, the birth date of Karl Landsteiner, the Nobel Prize winner who discovered the ABO blood group system.