

World Blood Donor Day

“Celebrating the gift of blood” 14 JUNE 2008

Announcing World Blood Donor Day, 14 June 2008

On 14 June 2008, 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, and to thank blood donors for their gift of blood. World Blood Donor Day was 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 lifesaving gift of voluntary unpaid blood donors who donate blood purely for altruistic reasons. As more and more countries achieve the goal of 100 per cent voluntary donation, there is growing appreciation of the vital role of voluntary unpaid donors who give blood on a regular basis. Regular donors are the safest blood donors and they are also the foundation of sustainable national blood supplies that are sufficient to meet the needs of all patients requiring transfusion. Retaining suitable blood donors should be a high priority for every country.

In 2008, the theme of World Blood Donor Day will be **“Giving Blood Regularly”** to support national blood donor programmes in building a stable base of voluntary unpaid donors who make a long-term commitment to blood donation. Slogans such as “Many Happy Returns” and “Once Is Not Enough” can be used to highlight the theme and emphasize the importance of regular donation by eligible donors in enabling blood collection to be planned to meet national requirements for specific blood groups and blood components and thus ensure access to safe blood transfusion when needed.

The dedication of World Blood Donor Day 2008 to regular blood donors has three broad objectives:

- To create wider public awareness of the need for regular donation because of the short shelf-life of blood components and to encourage existing and potential donors to donate blood at regular intervals
- To promote recognition that regular voluntary unpaid donors are healthy individuals and are therefore integral to public health systems; it is because they lead healthy lifestyles and are regularly screened that they are able to donate blood regularly
- To focus attention on donor health and the quality of donor care as critical factors in building donor commitment and a willingness to donate regularly.

World Blood Donor Day thus provides an opportunity for blood transfusion services to evaluate the effectiveness of their donor care programmes and involve blood donors themselves in identifying ways of increasing donor satisfaction and promoting donor loyalty.

World Blood Donor Day is jointly coordinated by four founding partners: 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 blood 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 unpaid blood donor programmes and to reinforce national and local campaigns.

The founding partners are pleased to announce that the global event on 14 June 2008 will be held in Dubai, hosted by the Government of the **United Arab Emirates** under the direct patronage of His Highness, President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

The joint website of the founding partners (www.wbdd.org) and the WHO webpage (www.who.int/worldblooddonorday) contain a World Blood Donor Day brochure and poster as well as additional resources, including the WBDD 2008 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 2008 and bring the world one step closer to 100 per cent voluntary unpaid blood 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>