World Blood Donor Day
"Celebrating your gift of blood" 14 JUNE

# Making the most of World Blood Donor Day

Some guidelines for organizers of World Blood Donor Day events or campaigns at global, regional and country level

Booklet supplied courtesy of the four founding partners of World Blood Donor Day

World Health Organization

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

FIODS

ISBT SITS

www.wbdd.org

# Contents

## Introduction


| | |
|---|---|
| Some background | 2 |
| The global need for safe blood and for 100 per cent voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation | 4 |
| Results thus far | 7 |
| The way forward and how YOU can help | 10 |


## Getting started


| | |
|---|---|
| Global collaboration | 12 |
| Ideas for events | 13 |
| Reaching young donors | 16 |
| Questions and answers | 20 |
| Key messages for the media and your target audiences | 22 |
| Resources | 24 |
| Sample announcement and fact sheet for you to adapt to suit your target audiences | 27 |
| Contacts | 31 |


## Conclusion


| | |
|---|---|
| World Blood Donor Day and a global strategy for 100 per cent voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation | 36 |

# Introduction

Voluntary, non-remunerated blood donors (hereafter referred to as voluntary blood donors, or simply vnrbd) are the lifeblood of a community and are considered to be the source of the safest blood and blood products for patients. Their donation is an altruistic gift and NOT a marketable commodity. This places them in a unique position, demanding special respect and care; it also places a responsibility on all involved in public health care to treat voluntary blood donors as VIPs. And hence World Blood Donor Day (WBDD) has been established to celebrate and thank voluntary blood donors for their gift of life.

A voluntary blood donation is thus a gift which cannot be valued in monetary terms, but the organizers of WBDD believe that such are the contributions of blood donors to patient care, day in, day out, a special day should be set aside once a year around the world (14 June), to remind everyone of the invaluable role of voluntary blood donors as co-partners with the medical profession in saving human life.

## Background

The designation of this special day has the support of all major stakeholders in blood transfusion medicine and blood transfusion services, including the World Health Organization (WHO), International Society of Blood Transfusion (ISBT), International Federation of Blood Donor Organizations (FIODS) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

Representatives from these organizations wish to remind readers that the purpose of the celebration on 14 June each year is not to attract a big influx of new voluntary blood donors at that time. Rather, the occasion is seen much more in terms of paying tribute to all blood donors around the world and especially to those who give blood on a regular basis two, three or more times each year.

Dr. Neelam Dhingra from WHO's Department of Essential Health Technologies explains:

"*The June date was selected as it is the anniversary of the birth of Karl Landsteiner, the Nobel Prize winner who discovered the ABO blood group system. It is our hope that in designating one special day each year to celebrate the role of these blood donors in health care around the world, a new generation of blood donors will follow their example, thereby providing the safest blood possible for use wherever and whenever it is needed to save life.*"

A steering committee has been constituted for World Blood Donor Day and this group has prepared the basic guidelines contained in this booklet for various activities and celebrations conducted around the world on or about 14 June. Information is also available on the WBDD web site: www.wbdd.org

The overall objective of WBDD is to increase awareness concerning the concept of altruistic blood donation, and to gain political commitment and support from health

authorities, with further approval and implementation of national policies and plans for improved blood service delivery at country level. The key partners in the World Blood Donor Day initiative (WHO, ISBT, FIODS, IFRC) see the purpose of the event having many far-reaching objectives, but all are linked directly with the building of true partnerships with civil society at the international, national and local levels. Through WBDD communities can give full recognition to what must be the most trusting partnership of all: a partnership that results with someone holding out his/her arm to give their own blood, almost always to people – to patients – they will never meet, but for whom this gesture is lifesaving.

It is this area of trust and public confidence that is crucial to a successful national blood programme. But it is only through the provision of a quality blood service that a public can grow in confidence in its blood services and through that confidence support it with regular blood donations. World Blood Donor Day is therefore a reminder about the importance of resources needed to help address specific responsibilities of blood programmes.

Resources are needed both to ensure the quality of the blood for patients, and to ensure that the programme has the public credibility needed if voluntary blood donors are to trust in the blood programme. The key partners in WBDD have each had a great deal of experience in blood issues, both relating to the needs of patients and the expectations of donors. This experience teaches us that these resources questions cannot be avoided, anywhere.

We know that many countries have struggling and underfunded health services, but we also know from experience that it is realistic to expect basic quality control in every blood service. Increasingly this means the provision of a service where appropriate care of the voluntary donor is afforded. We know the attitude and welcome of the staff can set the stage for a positive encounter and increase the likelihood of a one-time donor becoming a regular donor.

*"I am 15 years old and I have sickle-cell disease. Last year I needed to have a lifesaving operation. Thanks to many blood donors, my operation was successful and now I have more energy and can live a normal life. I ran cross-country this year for the first time in my life."*

***Mellissa Joseph, Grenada***

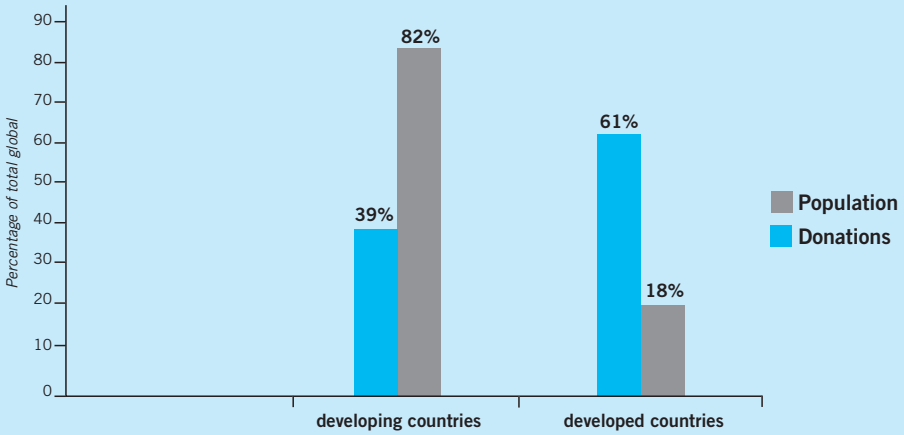
# The global need for safe blood and for 100 per cent voluntary blood donation

Safe blood saves lives – but, for too many patients around the world whose survival depends on blood transfusion, blood transfusion is either not available or not safe.

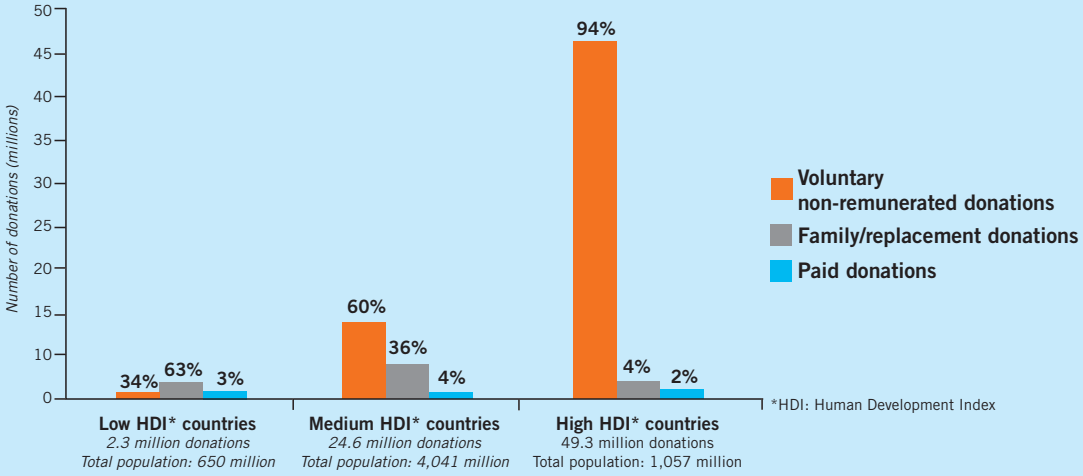
Every second of every day, people around the world – of all ages and from all walks of life – need blood transfusions to survive. The reasons for transfusion vary but the demand for blood is ever-present and growing:

- The number of accidents and injuries requiring blood transfusion is growing worldwide
- Developing countries face chronic shortages of blood which particularly affect children with severe anaemia due to malaria or malnutrition and women with complications of pregnancy or childbirth
- As developing countries expand diagnostic and treatment options – for example, for cancers and blood disorders requiring transfusion – the demand for blood is rising
- Technological advances in industrialized countries have led to new medical treatment regimens and procedures requiring transfusion.

## Donations versus population




## Types of blood donations



## The need for universal access…

While the need for blood is universal, access to blood for those who need it is sadly not. There is a major imbalance in access to safe blood between developing and industrialized countries:

- Only about 40 per cent of the blood collected each year is donated in developing countries, which are home to over 80 per cent of the world's population
- The average number of blood donations per 1,000 population is 12 times higher in high-income countries than in low-income countries
- An overwhelming 99 per cent of the 500,000 women who die each year during pregnancy and childbirth live in developing countries, with haemorrhage – which invariably requires blood transfusion – the most common cause of maternal deaths
- In Africa, approximately 70 per cent of all blood transfusions are given to children with severe anaemia due to malaria, the leading cause of death among children under the age of five
- The health-related Millennium Development Goals to reduce child mortality, improve maternal health and prevent HIV infection cannot be achieved without equitable and universal access to safe blood.

## …to safe blood

Blood transfusion saves lives, but the transfusion of unsafe blood puts lives at risk because HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, syphilis, Chagas' disease, malaria and other infections can be transmitted to the recipients through transfusion. Blood which tests positive for any of these infections cannot be transfused and is discarded, resulting in additional financial costs. These issues are of particular concern in countries facing blood shortages.

- Globally, up to 4 million people have been infected with HIV by the transfusion of unsafe blood
- The prevalence of hepatitis B, hepatitis C and syphilis in donated blood is still unacceptably high in many developing countries; the prevalence of Chagas' disease in donated blood is a major problem in some South and Central American countries
- Many countries lack policies, procedures or resources for ensuring the safety of blood, particularly in parts of Africa, Eastern Europe, Central Asia and South/South-East Asia which are facing the HIV/AIDS pandemic
- As some infections, such as HIV, cannot be detected in a person's blood during the "window period", laboratory testing of donated blood – no matter how sophisticated – is, alone, not enough to ensure a safe blood supply. The safest blood comes from the safest blood donors.

## The key to safe blood: safe donors…

Voluntary, unpaid blood donors – people who give blood of their own free will without receiving any form of cash or in-kind payment – are the key to ensuring that safe blood is available to every patient who needs it, wherever they may be.

Evidence from around the world shows that the prevalence of infection with HIV, hepatitis viruses and other transfusion-transmissible infections is invariably lowest among voluntary unpaid donors who give blood for purely altruistic reasons. Voluntary donors are more likely to be honest in answering the questions about their health and lifestyle that help to screen out those at risk of carrying these infections. They are also more likely to lead low-risk lifestyles,

benefiting both themselves and the patients who receive their blood. In contrast, the prevalence of infection among family replacement blood donors and paid donors is generally the same as in the general population.

## …regular donations…

In every country, a reliable supply of safe blood from donors with different blood groups is needed throughout the year. It is therefore crucial that healthy, voluntary, unpaid blood donors make a commitment to give blood regularly.

In addition to ensuring an adequate supply of blood at all times, regular voluntary blood donors are the safest donors because they have been educated about how to stay healthy and lead lifestyles that that are free from the risk of acquiring serious infections.

## …a strong national blood donor programme…

Every person involved in donor recruitment should value voluntary, unpaid blood donors as the source of a sustainable and safe blood supply. Regardless of the type of national blood programme – whether hospital-based or coordinated at national or regional levels – the common focus should be the recruitment and retention of voluntary unpaid donors. However, a well-organized national blood programme is key to effective communication with donors and good donor care.

Public awareness campaigns and donor education materials should be based on a well-researched assessment of the needs for information by the public and should address common fears or misconceptions that may deter people from donating blood. Healthy family replacement donors should be encouraged to become voluntary unpaid donors. By reminding them of how their loved ones have benefited from the gift of blood, they may recognize how regular voluntary blood donation will benefit other people's loved ones.

Particular attention should be given to youth donor retention strategies as these form the basis of a stable pool of blood donors in the future.

Professionalism in the handling and care of blood donors by staff will encourage the donor public to become regular blood donors as they will have confidence that the blood donation process is safe and their blood will be used appropriately. This will in turn attract new donors to come forward and donate blood.

## … and effective partnerships

An effective blood donor programme involves mobilization at grass roots as well as national levels and support from community leaders is vital in attracting sufficient numbers of low-risk, voluntary, unpaid blood donors.

Broad partnerships can be built with the community through Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and other non-governmental organizations and national service organizations, such as Lions Clubs and Rotary Clubs. Schools, colleges and universities are natural partners in reaching young people and encouraging them to commit to becoming regular blood donors.

Involving the private sector brings access to customers, staff and the families of staff members. Partnerships with community-based organizations will not only bring the message about voluntary blood donation to new audiences but also provide increased opportunities for blood donation sessions in the community at mobile sites as well as at static sites.

Doctors and nurses are also key partners who can motivate the families and friends of patients who have received a transfusion to become regular, voluntary blood donors. Professional organizations, such as national medical and nursing associations, can also play an important role in promoting awareness of the need for blood donors as well as encouraging the use of transfusion only when no alternative treatment is possible.

## Results thus far

Let us start with the launching of WBDD in Johannesburg 2004, where celebrations were a phenomenal success with a major media event including musical entertainment with invited dignitaries, celebrities and the launch of a new video about youth programmes (Club 25 Programmes) with participation of more than 1,500 students from 27 schools. The South African Minister of Health addressed the youth, and testimonies from blood recipients personified the message ***"Blood, A Gift For Life. Thank You"***. WBDD was celebrated elsewhere around the world in more than 70 countries with a common aim and objective i.e., to honour and thank voluntary, unpaid blood donors, and encourage new generations of voluntary, non-remunerated donors to donate their blood regularly, thereby ensuring a safe, sufficient blood supply for patients needing transfusion. The events included:

### *Cultural activities*

- Different cultural competitions in schools or other places: creation of banners, essays, "Thank You Blood Donor" greeting cards and posters. Performances by local artists, composition of a thank-you song for blood donors, radio quiz and school debates about blood donation
- Traditional dances celebrating the occasion (Denmark, Sri Lanka, Latvia)
- Awareness campaigns regarding the need for voluntary, unpaid donation (Morocco – campaign team visited all major areas around the country).

### *Campaigns and media partnerships*

- Material published and distributed to donors and future donors: folders, magazines, leaflets, T-shirts, brochures, phone cards and a range of other materials suitable for a variety of venues (e.g., train stations, hospitals, schools, universities, etc.) and a special letter stamp created for the first WBDD (Netherlands, China)
- In the United States of America the Secretary of Health and Human Services issued a statement recognizing and thanking blood donors for their generous contributions to their fellow citizens

- "This Summer, Carry the Torch" campaign to encourage blood donations from 14 June to 5 September (Canada).

## Sporting events

- Motorcycle rally, handball championship, friendly soccer match and marching event (Cameroon), and a "Walk For Life" was organized in which blood donors and people from health institutions participated (Peru)
- A major rally from Rawalpindi to Islamabad (Pakistan).

## Thanking of blood donors

- Postcards and thank-you messages for blood donors on inflated balloons (Netherlands), plaques, thank-you letters to donors and a "thankyou wall" with cards from patients who have benefited from donation (Singapore)
- Ceremony of gratitude where individuals and corporations, who have made remarkable contributions to blood donation, were recognized (Jordan)
- Award the "Donor of the Year" (Burkina Faso).

## Educational activities

- Seminars and lectures on blood donation and related themes and a Symposium on Quality in Blood Donation (India).

## At the blood centres

- Promotion of an open day at the blood bank, where the general public and dignitaries were invited to discover the blood bank for themselves (Iceland), and similar information and open days held elsewhere
- Gifts of appreciation/recognition such as flowers for each donor giving blood on WBDD and roses for all donors (Norway)
- WHO/PAHO organized a major event for honouring those who encourage voluntary, unpaid donation. From the Bahamas to Brazil to Washington the focus was on volunteers on this WBDD.

These inaugural WBDD celebrations were thus cosponsored by the collaborative efforts of the four international organizations working for the provision of safe blood globally: the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the International Federation of Blood Donor Organizations (FIODS) and the International Society of Blood Transfusion (ISBT). Between them, these organizations represent 192 WHO Member States, 185 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 50 national, voluntary blood donor organizations and more than 3,000 blood transfusion specialists throughout the world.

The participation of this huge collective membership ensured that World Blood Donor Day 2004 was celebrated as a global event and it set the scene for collaboration in WBDD celebrations over subsequent years.

## Activities since WBDD 2004

Global participation in WBDD grew in 2005 with unanimous global support arising from a special resolution at the World Health Assembly in May 2005 (WHA58.13), which designated WBDD to be an annual event on 14 June. The late Dr. LEE Jong-wook, Director-General of WHO, said at the time:

"*The WHO 192 Member States have agreed that World Blood Donor Day will be an officially recognized annual event. This will help raise awareness of the continuing need for safe blood and safe blood donors.*"

Subsequently, over 80 countries participated at a country level in celebrations tailored to suit local needs and resources and a major media event in Trafalgar Square (London) captured the attention of international and local journalists. A 'celebration gallery' at the square showed 100 huge posters of recipients of blood from Britain and around the world. Celebration galleries in London and seven other cities featured photographs and testimonies from people of all ages whose lives were saved or radically improved by blood transfusions – a special way for recipients to express their gratitude to the strangers who had changed their lives by donating their blood. Each poster featured a person who had received a blood transfusion with members of their families or friends, many holding hands. The symbolism was powerful, showing how when blood donors save a life, the lives of more than one person are touched.

Later in 2006, building on the success of the first two WBDDays, there was a focus on commitment:

- Commitment from healthy individuals to become regular, voluntary, unpaid blood donors
- Commitment from existing voluntary, unpaid donors to continue to donate regularly.

The need for commitment extends beyond blood donors to all partners working towards universal access to safe blood. Commitment is needed from both governments and blood transfusion services to promote voluntary, unpaid blood donation and phase out paid donation and family replacement donation (when people are asked to donate blood if it is needed for a relative or friend): patients who receive blood from voluntary, unpaid blood donors have been shown to have the lowest risk of acquiring infections such as HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C or Chagas' disease through transfusion.

Commitment is also needed from blood transfusion services and partner organizations to provide the highest standards of care at every stage of the transfusion process – from the collection of blood from the donor to its transfusion to the patient – in order to maintain donor loyalty and willingness to donate blood regularly.

## Commitment from the youth of the world

With each passing year WBDD and its wave of global solidarity – organizations and community groups around the world holding a rich variety of events on and around World Blood Donor Day to complement their ongoing activities – continue to grow. Moreover, WBDD and related events already seem to be making quite an impact on the wider agenda of 100 per cent vnrbd for the sake of global blood safety and equitable access for safe blood. In 2004-5 there were 39 countries with 100 per cent vnrbd and in 2006-7 there were 49 and the signs are clear that there are many other countries following suit. Interesting to note also is the growth of Club 25 Programmes since WBDD in Johannesburg 2004, and in this example of strong commitment by young people to voluntary blood donation we can envisage the full potential of WBDD.

The vital relationship between a country's voluntary blood donation programme and the capacity of its government and civil society to meet their broader responsibilities reflects the true value of voluntary blood donors in human development. For example the growth of Club 25 Programmes and other blood donor clubs, whereby young blood donors play significant roles in both curative medicine and health promotion, makes for both an economical public health model as well as an extraordinary contribution to wider civil society. Through an international network of Club 25 members, young blood donors have social interaction and collaboration at the global level, resulting in their acquisition of significant leadership skills which can later benefit their own country in wide-ranging activities. In effect, young blood donors commence their role in human development by giving blood. Then, they extend their community involvement, for example, by becoming HIV/AIDS peer educators or participating in other health promotion activities. Ultimately, they forge strong links of solidarity which, in turn, build their capacity to provide leadership for improved health and well-being in their communities over several decades.

WBDD remains an excellent opportunity for governments, policymakers and blood programmes to congratulate all young blood donors, so many of whom are not just regular donors but now really leaders in public health education by playing a key role as HIV/AIDS peer educators by promoting healthy lifestyles.

# The way forward and how YOU can help

Despite some progress in achievement of the ultimate aims and objectives of WBDD, much work remains and YOUR help is needed!

Data from the WHO Global Database on Blood Safety reveal that urgent action is required to meet the shortfall and imbalances in national blood supplies. Globally, over 81 million units of blood are collected annually, but only 39 per cent of these are collected in low and middle-income countries where 82 per cent of the world's population live.

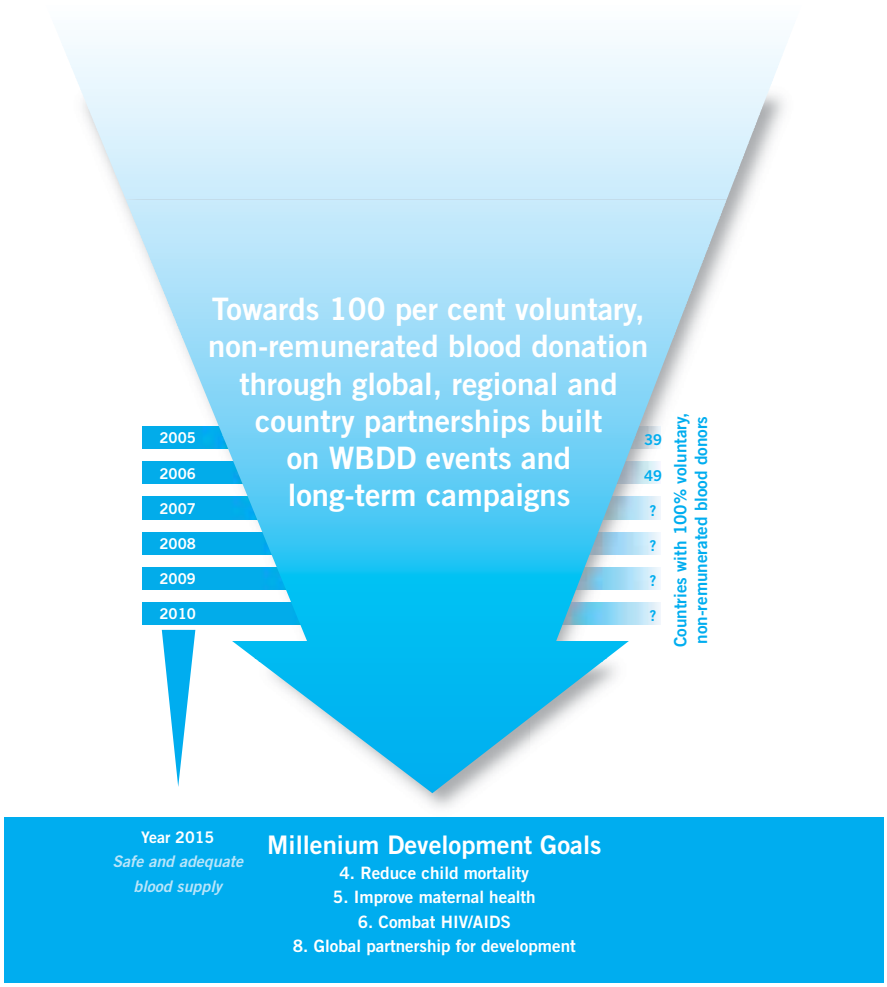
The main reason for this appears to be a failure by national governments to integrate blood service delivery as part of the overall health care system. Reversing this trend would help provide a sustainable blood programme whereby the community has equitable access to safe

blood and blood products. Blood safety must be integral to a country's health strategy while scaling up the health sector response to reduce the disease burden and the loss of life due to HIV and other blood-borne pathogens.

Through your activities on WBDD, through the partnerships formed at country level supporting events designed to pay tribute to voluntary blood donors, you can extend involvement of more key partners in a global initiative for blood safety. These partners could include governments, national health and education authorities, non-governmental organizations, community groups and the corporate sector.

Underpinning the global advocacy efforts on WBDD is the desire to make the safest blood possible accessible to everyone….and you have an important role in this!

***And here's how…read on !***



# Getting started

## Global collaboration

Collaborations and partnership at the international, regional and country level are a major driving force for a safe and adequate global blood supply. They should be exploited on occasions such as WBDD. Communities can be a powerful influence on governments to accept change, especially in relation to blood programmes in developing countries.

For example, you may find WBDD a suitable occasion to stress the benefits of voluntary blood donation across the various sectors of public health care. The chart below has been compiled from comments received in recent years from participants at various workshops focusing on recruitment of blood donors and it may help you identify some of the benefits of voluntary blood donation in your own country.

## Overall benefits of regular, voluntary blood donation

### Donor

- Provides health education and encourages maintenance of healthy lifestyles
- Provides regular health checks
- Increases self-esteem
- Develops role models and donor motivators
- Earns recognition from the community
- Provides social engagement and a sense of belonging.

### Blood Service

- Enables provision of a sustainable, quality and accessible blood supply – matching supply and demand
- Potentially reduces rates of transfusion-transmitted infections
- Forges partnerships with community
- Enhances public confidence regarding blood safety and availability
- Facilitates effective planning and budget management
- Contributes to cost efficiencies – donor retention vs new donor recruitment and inventory management
- Reduces administrative tasks associated with family replacement systems.

### Patient

- Equitable access to safe blood, including in emergency situations and disasters
- Improves community health and health outcomes
- Reduced risk of immunological complications and adverse reactions
- Creates a sense of being 'cared for' by others
- Less pressure on family/patient to find donors
- Motivates a spirit of generosity, providing possibilities for reciprocal volunteering in the future.

### Community

- Ensures availability of blood, including in emergencies and disasters
- Promotes healthy lifestyles
- Creates a sense of community spirit and pride
- Encourages volunteerism and community participation
- Encourages community partnerships and networks
- Increased community pride/self esteem
- Improved quality of life.

Once you identify the benefits of voluntary blood donation, you can easily set about establishing partnerships for WBDD. Partnerships, for example, between international agencies, the private sector, community-based and/or non-governmental organizations will help not only raise the profile of WBDD but will lead to the integration of specialized expertise. You will create a range of opportunities e.g., sponsorship and skill-sharing to participate in a worldwide movement committed to the achievement of 100 per cent voluntary blood donation.

This is what WBDD is all about, so you are encouraged to tap into whichever community groups are available to help put WBDD on the map in your country.

## Ideas for events

On 14 June your organization can join the global celebration to raise awareness of the importance of voluntary, unpaid blood donation and to encourage new and existing blood donors to donate blood regularly throughout the year while maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Even if your country already holds a national blood donor day on a different date, World Blood Donor Day is a chance to highlight your activities as part of a wider global movement of solidarity.

The day also offers an opportunity to enlist the support of a wider set of actors – including non-governmental organizations, the private sector and the media – as partners in the quest for universal access to safe blood. Coordinating your activities with others at all levels in your country will ensure maximum visibility and impact.

### Objectives

World Blood Donor Day events should:

- Raise awareness of the importance of regular, voluntary, unpaid blood donation and a strong national blood donor programme in ensuring that safe blood is available to every patient who needs it
- Thank existing voluntary, unpaid blood donors and encourage them to donate regularly
- Recruit new, safe, voluntary blood donors
- Encourage healthy donors who have given blood when required by a family or community member to become regular, voluntary unpaid donors
- Promote healthy lifestyles among blood donors to protect both their own health and that of the patients who receive their blood
- Communicate the importance of the careful assessment of blood donors to ensure that giving blood will not cause any adverse effects to either the donors themselves or the recipients of their blood – this includes the need for potential donors to be truthful in answering questions about their own health and lifestyle
- Stress that anyone in the community can be involved in World Blood Donor Day and ongoing activities – even if they cannot give blood – for example by volunteering their time, donating funds, or encouraging others to donate blood.

### Event ideas

While some of these ideas for events focus on the day itself, they include ongoing activities or collaborations that can be launched using World Blood Donor Day as a catalyst. They

have been grouped by primary goal, although many will in fact contribute to achieving multiple objectives.

The impact of many of these activities can be boosted by securing the participation of local and national politicians, community leaders and other public figures.

## *Raising awareness*

- Hold seminars, lectures, debates, quizzes (including radio/TV) on blood donation and related themes
- Hold open days at blood centres, paying special attention to warm welcomes and information displays
- Plan health tours: vehicles driving through urban and rural areas to distribute information on voluntary, unpaid donation
- Organize competitions for the most creative banners, slogans, posters, stickers, T-shirts, caps, pens and essays
- Distribute posters, leaflets, badges and other items featuring information on blood donation to the general public
- Encourage curriculum coordinators to incorporate information about blood donation and blood transfusion in education programmes
- Organize sponsored walks to raise public awareness and use the proceeds to support ongoing activities.

## *Thanking existing blood donors and encouraging regular donation and healthy lifestyles*

- Relay thank-you messages to blood donors using songs, postcards, balloons, display walls, letters from patients, telephone calls, text messages, newspaper advertisements, letters to the media, greeting cards signed by local/national celebrities
- Organize award ceremonies with local/national officials for regular blood donors, including certificates or other tokens of recognition for milestones such as 25, 50 or 100 donations
- Set up a "wall of fame" in the community featuring individuals who have made a large number of donations, as well as messages of thanks from patients who have received blood transfusion
- Hold a party to bring together long-serving donors and young donors who have recently given blood for the first time; invite a guest speaker, such as a well-known person who has received blood
- Start a campaign to encourage blood donors to mark their birthdays by "Giving the Gift of Blood"
- Organize a concert for young donors, celebrating their involvement and stressing the importance of a healthy, low-risk lifestyle
- Enlist doctors and nurses to portray blood donors as "partners in health" and to relay messages about the importance of staying healthy to donate blood responsibly
- Contact regular voluntary donors to explore their interest in setting up a voluntary blood donor association.

## *Recruiting new blood donors*

- Experience shows that regular donors tend to be the best recruiters of new donors and that personal communication is one of the most effective means of spreading the word

- Produce a leaflet for use on World Blood Donor Day and beyond, urging existing blood donors to encourage healthy friends and family members to become donors
- During open days at blood centres, offer blood-group testing and the opportunity to sign up as a blood donor
- Set up a web site and/or toll-free telephone number that people can use to obtain information and to register as blood donors
- Create 'pledge forms' enabling people to pledge to become regular donors, and distribute them widely in, for example, banks, shops, post offices and in the street
- Encourage school, community and professional theatre groups to produce plays highlighting the need for safe blood donors
- Work with schools, colleges and universities to form blood donor clubs and Club 25 initiatives; provide donors with testimonials for inclusion in their CVs
- Involve schools in encouraging students to give their first donation of blood on the day they are legally recognized as adults
- Organize sporting events involving blood donors and the community, such as football matches or a 'walk for life': seeing healthy athletes as blood donors shows that giving blood does not harm an individual's health
- Develop partnerships with sporting groups to promote the recruitment of blood donors from their young and healthy membership base.

## *Mobilizing the media and the private sector to promote blood donation*

*(there are some key messages highlighted further on in this booklet)*

- Contact national and local media in advance of World Blood Donor Day to secure their interest and support; provide them with information and 'good news' stories about blood donors and patients and ask them to support an ongoing campaign to recruit voluntary blood donors
- Invite journalists to donate blood and report on their experience
- Produce a short television or radio spot promoting voluntary blood donation, if possible featuring a local/national celebrity; ask national and radio services to broadcast it free as a public service announcement
- Propose the inclusion of a storyline relating to safe blood donation in a popular television or radio soap or drama
- Involve local businesses by encouraging them to promote World Blood Donor Day in their marketing campaigns and organize blood collection sessions in their workplaces; use the business pages of newspapers to thank participating companies
- Ask mobile phone companies to promote World Blood Donor Day by sending text messages to their subscribers on 14 June
- Ask banking organizations to put World Blood Donor Day messages on the screens of their automatic teller machines.

## *Building other partnerships*

- Enlist doctors and nurses to encourage people who donated blood when it was needed by a family member or friend to become regular, voluntary, unpaid donors
- Work with patient associations to encourage members relying on transfusion (for example, for haemophilia, thalassaemia, sickle-cell disease, trauma and cancer) to write letters of thanks to newspapers, take part in radio/TV spots, speak in schools, and write letters to politicians about the importance of a strong, national blood transfusion service
- Ask university departments of education, media studies, marketing and computer stud-

ies for help with donor information and education materials, such as leaflets, web sites and videos

- Enlist the support of the ambulance, fire and police services for donor awareness and recruitment campaigns
- Enlist religious, women's, community, youth and national service organizations (e.g., Rotary Club, Scouts, Lions Clubs) to plan World Blood Donor Day activities and ongoing education, awareness and recruitment programmes.

## Reaching young donors

Young people who tend to be healthy, idealistic and motivated are an excellent pool of potential donors. Recruiting and retaining young donors not only improves the long-term safety and sufficiency of a country's blood supply, but can also reduce the prevalence of HIV/AIDS by promoting safe lifestyles among young people. There are numerous youth programmes around the world promoting voluntary blood donation, many closely associated with FIODS, including annual youth camps. Another 'model' which has received worldwide attention since WBDD 2004 has been the Pledge/Club 25, and so space is provided here to summarize the concept which may help you reach your young, potential blood donors.

### *What is Club 25?*

Club 25 is a youthful concept, promoting the value of *saving lives by giving blood*. Through Club 25 young people are encouraged to attend a blood centre, learn about healthy lifestyles and to give blood regularly, aiming for about 20 blood donations by the age of 25 years.

They also share what they have learned with their communities through health promotion activities to prevent HIV/AIDS, substance abuse and other health-risk behaviour; in addition, there are opportunities to be active in promoting first aid, good nutrition, physical exercise and road safety.

### *How does Club 25 function?*

1. **Membership:** criteria will vary from country to country but here are some ideas:
    - Blood donors aged 16-25 years who have donated at least two donations a year
    - First-time donors who commit to giving blood regularly (two or three donations a year).

2. **Aims:** these will also vary from country to country but generally Club 25 Programmes are part of an overall blood donor retention strategy. For example, in South Africa the Club 25 Programme aims to:
    - Establish a process whereby senior school blood donors will be retained at the time they leave school
    - Create a lifelong commitment in school leavers to the concept of regular donation of safe blood after they leave school.

## *Where did the idea of Club 25 start?*

It all began in Zimbabwe in 1989 when a pilot programme was introduced to retain young blood donors. Entitled "Pledge 25", the strategy involved the setting up of donor clubs, targeting young people just leaving school. The pledge simply required members to commit to making 25 blood donations after leaving school. Peer support became a crucial element as the clubs helped young people talk about their experiences and to discuss issues related to healthy lifestyles. Members were given educational materials and very soon promotion of safe blood donation and healthy lifestyles was finding its way into the whole community.

The concept rapidly spread to other parts of Africa (South Africa, Togo, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, Malawi, Botswana) and across the world to the Philippines, Indonesia, India, Haiti and elsewhere.

And we now have "*International Club 25, one world…one blood*" linking young blood donors together from all countries! But remember, membership may also embrace young people who cannot donate blood but choose to volunteer their services to the overall aims of the Club 25 Programme.

## *How to set up a Club 25*

Various models of the original Club 25 idea exist but generally they follow a similar structure:

- The Club elects a national or local administrative committee to organize activities i.e., a national youth blood donor activity or celebrations for World Blood Donor Day (June 14)
- Peer promoters are elected to assist the blood service in the recruitment of voluntary blood donors from low-risk populations and in turn the blood service supervises and supports the Club.

Operationally, the clubs function according to local needs but one common thread is the education of young people about risk behaviour, helping ensure that they remain HIV-negative. Data from the South African National Blood Service (SANBS) helps to underline the significance of Club 25 in this important area. Within four years of implementing the Club 25 programme, SANBS reported:

- 35,193 active donors on Club 25 donor list
- 177,426 donations from Club 25 members
- increase in 18-25 year old donors on SANBS donor list from 6 to 15 per cent
- decrease in HIV prevalence of Club 25 panel to 0.04 per cent in a country where HIV prevalence is around 26-28 per cent.

## *Lessons learned from Club 25 Programmes?*

The Malawi Club 25 has only been operational for two years and the Club 25 leaders there, Joyce and Merger, tell of their experience:

"*As well as promoting healthy lifestyles, Malawi Club 25 provides opportunities for social interaction at different levels and collaboration and contact at the global level. There are positive effects to all members regarding personal development and leadership skills. We have established the following indicators for monitoring and evaluation:*

### *Percentage increase in:*

- *the number of youth involved in donating blood*
- *the total number of regular, voluntary and non-remunerated donors among the youth*
- *the number of young donors who return to give blood a second or subsequent time*
- *the average number of donations per person per year (within acceptable limits of safety to the donor) among young people*
- *the number of young people enquiring about the blood bank.*

### *Percentage decrease in:*

- *the number of donors who have to be permanently excluded because of transfusion-transmissible infections*
- *the number of donor dropouts.*"

### *Over to you!*

1. Find a responsible, dedicated and committed person to drive the programme… you could launch it on WBDD
2. Gain commitment and support from top levels at your blood centre
3. Monitor, evaluate, change the programme until it works for your country
4. Log into the International Club 25 network at www.ifrc.org/youth/activities/club 25

# Questions and answers about blood donation

### *Why should people donate blood?*

Safe blood saves lives. Blood is commonly used for women with complications of pregnancy, such as ectopic pregnancies and haemorrhage before, during or after childbirth, children with severe anaemia often resulting from malaria or malnutrition, accident victims and surgical and cancer patients.

There is a constant need for a regular supply of blood because blood can be stored only for a limited period of time before use. Regular blood donation by a sufficient number of healthy people is needed to ensure that blood will always be available whenever and wherever it is needed.

Blood is the most precious gift that anyone can give to another person – the gift of life. A decision to donate your blood can save a life, or even several if your blood is separated into its components – red cells, platelets and plasma – which can be used individually for patients with specific conditions.

### *What happens when I give blood?*

Whether it is the first time you give blood or you are a regular donor, the blood service must make sure that you will come to no harm by donating blood. It must also check that your blood will be safe for the person who receives it

.

Before you give blood, you will be asked some questions about your medical history, including any medication you are taking, and about your current health and lifestyle. These questions will be asked only to safeguard your own health and the health of the person receiving your blood. You will be told whether you are eligible to give blood and, if not, whether you may be able to donate blood in the future. Any personal information that you are asked to give will be kept confidential and will not be used for any other purpose.

It is very important to be truthful about any reasons why your blood might not be suitable. Although blood should always be tested for infections that can be transmitted by transfusion, such as HIV, hepatitis B and C, and syphilis, a test may not be able to detect a very recent infection. This means that even though the blood may test negative for a particular infection, it might still infect a patient receiving a blood transfusion.

After answering the questions you will also be given a brief medical examination that may include checking your pulse and blood pressure and ensuring that your weight meets a certain minimum. A drop of blood will then be taken from your fingertip to check that giving blood will not make you anaemic. Your health is very important to the blood transfusion service and blood will not be taken unless you can safely give a donation that day.

Donating blood is very simple. You will be made as comfortable as possible, usually in a special chair or on a bed. The area inside one of your elbows will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution before a trained health worker inserts a sterile needle, connected to a blood collection bag, into your vein. It usually takes only about 10 minutes to donate blood.

After resting for 10 or 15 minutes and taking some refreshment, you will be able to return to your normal activities, although you should avoid strenuous activity for the rest of the day. You should drink plenty of fluids over the next 24 hours.

### *How much blood will be taken? Will I have enough?*

In most countries, the volume of blood taken is 450 millilitres, less than 10 per cent of your total blood volume (the average adult has 4.5 to 5 litres of blood). In some countries, a smaller volume is taken. Your body will replace the lost fluid within about 36 hours.

### *Is giving blood safe?*

Yes. Remember that you will only be accepted as a blood donor if you are fit and well. Your health and well-being are very important to the blood service. The needle and blood bag used to collect blood come in a sterile pack that cannot be reused, so the process is made as safe as possible.

### *Does it hurt?*

Just squeeze the inside of your elbow tightly and you will get a quick idea of what the needle feels like. All you should feel is a gentle pressure and a momentary "pin-prick" sensation. Blood donation is very safe and any discomfort or problem during or after donating is very uncommon.

### *Who can give blood, and how often?*

The criteria for donor selection may vary from country to country, but blood can be donated by most people who are healthy and do not have an infection that can be transmitted through their blood.

The age at which people are eligible to give blood varies, but is commonly between the ages of 17 and 65. Some countries accept donations from people from the age of 16 and extend the upper age limit beyond 65 years.

Healthy adults can give blood regularly – at least twice a year. Your local blood service can tell you how frequently you can give blood.

### *Who should not give blood?*

You should not give blood if your own health might suffer as a result. The first concern of the blood service is to ensure that blood donation does no harm to the blood donor. You should not donate blood if:

- You are feeling unwell
- You are anaemic
- You are pregnant, have been pregnant within the last year or are breastfeeding
- You have certain medical conditions such as heart disease, low or high blood pressure, diabetes, epilepsy
- You are taking certain medications, such as antibiotics.

You may be able to donate blood at a later time. In some cases, however, in order to protect your own health you will not be able to donate blood.

You should not donate blood if it might cause harm to the patient who receives it. Blood can transmit life-threatening infections to patients who receive blood transfusions. You should not donate blood if:

- You have or may recently have contracted a sexually transmitted disease, such as HIV or syphilis, that can be passed on to a patient who receives your blood
- Your lifestyle puts you at risk of contracting an infection that can be transmitted through your blood: for example, if you have more than one sexual partner or have sexual contact with prostitutes
- You have ever injected recreational, non-medicinal drugs
- You have recently had a tattoo, skin scarification or ear or body piercing – your local blood service can tell you how long you must wait before giving blood
- You have had sexual contact with anyone in the above categories.

### *How will I feel after giving blood?*

You should feel great for selflessly giving someone the gift of blood!

# Key messages for the media and your target audiences

## Key messages from WBDD partners

- All partners are striving for a much greater commitment from governments to adhere to their previous agreements which urged the development of national blood services based on voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation (Resolution WHA28.72)

- Voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation (vnrbd) is considered to be the cornerstone in the strategy for ensuring safe blood and blood products. However, only around 50 countries have achieved 100 per cent vnrbd. Yet, public education and donor recruitment/retention campaigns in developing countries continue to remain seriously under-staffed and under-resourced. In developing countries, paid and family/replacement donors still constitute a major proportion of blood donors, and only 25 per cent of the donors are vnrbds.

- Achievement of the health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to reduce child mortality, improve maternal health and effective prevention of HIV infection would never be possible without more equitable and universal access to safe blood.

## Working for solutions

- Though progress in parts of the world has been significant, a very large number of countries still do not have adequate policies, practices or resources in place to ensure safe blood and blood products. HIV has devastated parts of Africa, and health systems, are being stretched to their limits. Rapidly accelerating HIV epidemics in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and parts of South/South-East Asia pose a serious challenge to national blood transfusion services

- Even though altruism still remains at the heart of the blood donor movement, there are some differences in what compels or keeps donors from donating in developed and developing countries. The issues of convenience of time and place seem to be the key concerns of blood donors in developed countries: there is overwhelming evidence that blood services need to do a lot more to make blood donation convenient as many donors simply fail to make repeat donations because of inconvenient times/locations of blood collections. On the other hand, populations in developing countries still need basic awareness to dispel myths, fears and misconceptions.

## Our initiatives

- On every WBDD we strive to create a sense of solidarity amongst the world's family of voluntary blood donors, and we also take the opportunity to remind governments that voluntary blood donors are a crucial part of a nation's health care resources

- Through WBDD partnerships we aim for:
  - The building of stronger political and social commitment at all levels, for voluntary blood donation
  - The creation of an enabling environment for the sustained recruitment and retetion of voluntary blood donors
  - Improved access to safer blood
  - Mobilization of a wider set of actors, including the private sector, NGOs and the media, to promote voluntary blood donation
  - Closer linkages and collaboration between national blood transfusion services and other relevant health and development programmes.

## Some random key messages with international flavour

In a real sense WBDD belongs to you: it is designed to stimulate partnerships at the country level with key organizations such as your local media. WBDD partnerships can help shape and improve the effectiveness and sustainability of national blood programmes by focusing attention on the source of safe blood – safe blood donors. For your convenience we list below some general ideas to relate your efforts to the wider world.

### Key messages – International:

- The overwhelming majority of the world's population do not have access to safe blood.
- Some 60 per cent of global blood supplies goes to 18 per cent of the world's people, leaving 82 per cent of the global population inadequately covered.
- Problems with collecting blood in developing countries include: high levels of blood diseases in these countries, such as HIV, meaning safe blood is difficult to collect; and the infrastructure for collecting and storing blood is very limited.
- WHO and other organizations have advocated clear strategies to increase universal access to safe blood. These are based on promoting regular, voluntary, unpaid donations and on nationally coordinated blood transfusion services.
- Malawi, a country with a high incidence of HIV/AIDS and huge development challenges, has managed to set up a functioning blood service based on voluntary, unpaid donation in just a few years. The benefits are tangible and dramatic – many more children and mothers are surviving!
- South Africa has had 100 per cent voluntary, unpaid donation well before it established a national blood service. With HIV prevalence of 23.3 per cent in the adult population, only 0.02 per cent of its regular blood donors are HIV-positive.

# Resources

## Announcement

An official announcement of the annual World Blood Donor Day and its objectives can be viewed on the wbdd web site: www.wbdd.org

The web site is updated regularly and includes information about blood safety, planned events for World Blood Donor Day and links to other web sites, as well as useful downloads including the contents of the campaign kit and press materials.

If your organization wishes to share information about the events you are planning or to share a slogan or donor education materials, please use the "World Blood Donor Day website listing request" included in this campaign kit.

## Logo and strapline

**The World Blood Donor Day logo and the strapline "Celebrating the gift of blood" is available in electronic format on the web site and may be freely used in materials such as leaflets, posters, stickers, pins, badges, T-Shirts and other promotional items.**

World Blood Donor Day
"Celebrating your gift of blood" 14 JUNE

## Press materials

An announcement concerning WBDD is routinely sent electronically to international and national media in advance of World Blood Donor Day informing them about the forthcoming event on 14 June and providing background information on key blood transfusion issues. All media will be encouraged to cover these issues not only on the day itself but throughout the year and national media will also be encouraged to cover World Blood Donor Day events in their countries. At country level you should feel free to adapt the WBDD "umbrella themes" to suit your situation. Some key messages have already been provided but the list below is added as a summary of main points. Each year WBDD may have a particular focus but this list serves as a 'menu' from which you can direct more specific messages to reach your specific goals:

- Safe blood saves millions of lives each year. Safe blood is a fundamental need for the health system of every country.
- In all regions of the world, blood shortages result in unnecessary deaths or ill-health. There is a desperate need for more people to donate blood on a regular basis, especially in developing countries where blood shortages are particularly acute.
- In many countries, there remains a significant risk of transmission of HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C and other blood-borne infections through unsafe transfusion.
- Achievement of the health-related Millennium Development Goals to reduce child mortality, improve maternal health and combat HIV/AIDS is not possible without adequate supplies of safe blood and blood products.
- Voluntary, unpaid blood donors are the cornerstone of safe and adequate blood supplies:

  - The risk of transmitting HIV and other infections through transfusion is significantly lower when blood is donated by voluntary, altruistic blood donors rather than by family/replacement donors or paid donors
  - Regular donation by voluntary blood donors is critical in ensuring that sufficient blood is available to meet the needs of all patients requiring transfusion
- The ultimate goal is that every country should achieve 100 per cent voluntary, unpaid blood donation
- The focus of World Blood Donor Day is commitment:
  - From healthy individuals to become regular, voluntary, unpaid blood donors
  - From existing voluntary, unpaid donors to continue to donate regularly
  - From both governments and blood transfusion services to promote voluntary, unpaid blood donation, phase out family replacement donation and eliminate paid donation by strengthening their blood donor education, recruitment and retention programmes
  - From blood transfusion services and partner organizations to provide the highest standards of care at every stage of the transfusion process
  - From clinicians to prescribe blood transfusion only when no alternative treatments are available and to ensure the safety of the transfusion process.

## Some PR objectives for WBDD for you to adapt to local needs (sample ideas only)

- To develop or strengthen relationships with MoH and their advisers so they will have empathy and understanding with those involved in building blood programmes with a basis of voluntary blood donation

- To refocus on the personal aspects of voluntary blood donation which arguably have been largely overshadowed in recent decades by the ascendancy of the pharmaceutical culture into blood programmes: by its focus on the voluntary blood donor WBDD helps remind health professionals that donors are integral to modern medicine and they should never be taken for granted

- To improve the quality of service to voluntary blood donors: recognition to staff who provide the necessary professional and excellent donor care

- To encourage blood centres and recruiters to develop a marketing focus in their approach to establishing voluntary blood donation around the world: remember donors themselves are the best recruiters

- To help ensure blood centres acquire 'quality' in all aspects of blood service delivery but always taking into consideration the needs and expectations of voluntary blood donors: success probably has more to do with the expectations a donor has of the service…not so much with the urgency of the blood

- To reinforce positive attitudes to voluntary blood donation

- To involve the media as a key global partner in the push to global blood safety and to use the media's capacity to unite voluntary blood donors worldwide…foster a sense of solidarity amongst all voluntary blood donors through the powerful symbolism of blood donation

- **Where applicable**, to reinforce the outcomes of the inaugural WBDD of 2004 which saw a focus on young people to start the process of building a new generation of voluntary blood donors

- **Where applicable**, to explore the benefits of Club 25 programmes to the wider health promotion field (e.g., using examples to demonstrate the cost effectiveness of having young blood donors play a key role in HIV/AIDS peer educators by encouraging healthy lifestyles)

- To highlight the social and development benefits of voluntary blood donors in providing a healthy base for civil society

- Population ageing rapidly….increased demand for blood for over 55s in many countries, so WBDD can be a tool to highlight specific trends

- To highlight trends in underdeveloped countries: e.g., will governments turn the resources previously dedicated to self-preservation to betterment of life? If so, there will be an increase in blood usage with more surgery; so WBDD can focus on these new developments, new demands

- A blood supply dependent on the voluntary blood donor remains the gold standard for safety for the foreseeable future

- Many underdeveloped countries do not have resources to achieve appropriate levels of safety the more developed countries have come to take for granted….so WBDD provides an opportunity to also put the spotlight on these services so that organizations such as ISBT, WHO, FIODS, IFRC and others such as AABB can adopt strategies to offer expertise to a broad audience across the world

- Recreating a donor-friendly world

- Reinforce those factors in favour of donation universally:
  - loyalty
  - pride
  - and a sense of responsibility (occasions which give recognition to the importance of being a donor help, and hence recognition on WBDD to your voluntary blood donors is important).

***All of the above should be regarded as ideas, triggers to get you started in planning WBDD events in your country to suit local needs and to help you achieve priority concerns.***

# Sample announcement for you to adapt to suit your target audience

"*It gives us great pleasure to announce once again 14 June as World Blood Donor Day, a special day dedicated to voluntary, non-remunerated blood donors that is celebrated annually throughout the world.*

*Millions of people owe their lives to people they will never meet – people who donate their blood freely and without any reward. However, the overwhelming majority of the world's population do not have access to safe blood. Over 80 million units of blood are donated every year, but only 38 per cent are collected in developing countries where 82 per cent of the global population lives. In addition, many countries remain dependent on donation by the families or friends of patients who require blood and, in some countries, blood donors are still paid. Yet evidence from around the world demonstrates that voluntary, unpaid donors are the foundation of a safe blood supply because they are least likely to transmit potentially life-threatening infections, such as HIV and hepatitis viruses, to the recipients of their blood. It is to these unsung heroes that World Blood Donor Day is dedicated.*

*World Blood Donor Day builds on the success of World Health Day 2000 which was devoted to the theme 'Safe Blood Starts With Me: Blood Saves Lives'. The enthusiasm and energy with which this day was celebrated indicated that there would be a positive response to an opportunity to give thanks each year to the millions of people who give the precious gift of life. And so the inaugural WBDD was celebrated in 2004, which also built on the International Blood Donor Day organized annually by the International Federation of Blood Donor Organizations since 1995.*

*World Blood Donor Day is not intended to replace events such as national Blood Donor Days, but provides a special opportunity for a united, global celebration on a day that has particular significance: 14 June, the birth date of Karl Landsteiner, the Nobel Prize winner who discovered the ABO blood group system.*

*While it is hoped that World Blood Donor Day will create wider awareness of the importance of voluntary blood donation and encourage more people to become regular blood donors, the purpose is not to attract a big influx of new donors on 14 June. Rather, it is designed to celebrate and thank those individuals who voluntarily donate their blood without any reward, except the knowledge that they have helped to save lives, particularly those who give blood on a regular basis two, three or more times each year.*

*The day provides an opportunity to highlight the fact that voluntary, non-remunerated blood donors are the foundation of a safe blood supply because they are associated with significantly lower levels of infections that can be transmitted by transfusion, including HIV and hepatitis viruses. Screening for transfusion-transmissible infections is essential, but the safest donations come from the safest donors.*

*The focus of World Blood Donor Day, which celebrates the gift of blood, is always on voluntary blood donors. It is our hope that, in designating one special day each year to celebrate the role of voluntary blood donors around the world, a new generation of blood donors will follow their example, providing the safest blood possible for use wherever and whenever it is needed to save life.*

*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. Between them, these organizations represent 193 Member States, 185 national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 50 voluntary blood donor organizations and blood transfusion specialists throughout the world.*"

# Sample fact sheet for you to adapt to suit your target audience

## Blood, Safety and Donation – A Global View

The chance of receiving a safe transfusion if you need one varies enormously from one country to another, depending largely on whether there is a good, safe blood donor programme in place. Some 60 per cent of the global blood supply goes to 18 per cent of the world's population. There is a serious disparity between countries when it comes to both the availability and safety of blood.

People in developing countries continue to face the greatest risks from unsafe blood and blood products. In general, countries with higher per capita incomes have higher donation rates, more efficient blood collection systems, more available blood and more voluntary, unpaid donors, who have been shown to be the safest donors.

In wealthy countries, it is estimated that one out of every ten people entering a hospital needs blood. That person may be a trauma victim — due to an accident or burns — they may need heart surgery or an organ transplant, or they may be receiving treatment with blood products for leukaemia, cancer or other diseases, such as sickle-cell anaemia.

With an ageing population, advances in medical treatments and procedures requiring blood transfusions, the demand for blood continues to increase in wealthy countries. According to national statistics, 4.5 million Americans would die each year without blood transfusions. The national blood service of England and Wales reported that in 2004 blood donors saved or improved approximately one million lives.

In low-income countries, women and children are the groups with the greatest need for blood. More than half a million women die every year from complications related to pregnancy and childbirth worldwide – 99 per cent of them in developing countries. Haemorrhage, accounting for 25 per cent of complications, is the most common cause of maternal death. Up to 70 per cent of all blood transfusions in Africa are given to children with severe anaemia due to malaria, which accounts for about one in five of all childhood deaths in Africa.

### *Safety issues*

In the early 1990s, unsafe transfusions were estimated to be responsible for up to 10 per cent of all HIV infections, many of them in high-income countries. HIV-contaminated blood now accounts for approximately 5 per cent of HIV infections in Africa today.

In many countries more and more testing is being done to make blood safe, but the majority of developing nations still do not carry out even the most basic mandatory tests for diseases such as HIV or hepatitis B and C. Annually, some six million tests that should be done to check for infections are not done.

Many countries still lack a nationally coordinated blood transfusion service. Despite some recent improvements in this important area, fewer than 30 per cent of countries have a well-organized service in place.

Too many countries still rely on family replacement (a member of the patient's family donating his/her blood) or paid donors. Argentina, for instance, relies heavily on replacement donors, who make up 92 per cent of its blood supply. Although Pakistan has increased its voluntary, unpaid blood donation in recent years to about 20 per cent of its blood supply, replacement donors make up about 70 per cent and paid donors about 10 per cent of blood supplies.

Family replacement donors may feel under pressure to donate and may therefore hide aspects of their health and lifestyle, which could mean that their blood is more likely to contain infection. In the case of paid donors, governments may think that the financial incentive will motivate more donation and boost supplies, but paid donors are often pushed by need and are therefore also more likely to avoid mentioning important details about their health status.

## *Getting the right blood to the right patient, at the right time*

At the heart of global efforts to ensure universal access to safe blood is the move to a system of regular, voluntary, unpaid blood donors. Deemed the safest, it is also demonstrated that such donors have a sense of responsibility towards their community and keep themselves healthy so as to be able to keep giving safe blood.

It is clear that quality checking is also vital to a safe blood supply. A reliable system needs to be in place to ensure proper screening and proper matching of blood. The error of giving the wrong blood can be fatal to a patient.

Centralized blood collection systems coordinated nationally have several advantages over small blood banks – better trained personnel, better equipment, for instance – and those benefits contribute substantially to blood safety.

These centres can also provide better attention to donors, which is important for increasing voluntary, unpaid donations, and are better equipped to break blood down into its component parts. In many cases, full blood transfusions are not needed as the patient may only require one component of the blood for his or her condition. Overuse or misuse of whole-blood transfusions is not only less cost-effective, it also increases the risk of transmitting infections.

## *Progress*

Real improvements are being made:

- In China, voluntary blood donation went from 45 per cent of donations in 2000 to 91.3 per cent in 2004 and has steadily improved since that time. China's first national training workshop on voluntary blood donor recruitment was conducted by WHO and the International Federation in Hang Zhou in December 2004. Within the next two years, a further 24 workshops were scheduled in provinces throughout China, resulting in more than 3,500 participants trained in voluntary blood donor recruitment

- Malaysia, China and India reached 100 per cent screening of donated blood for HIV by the year 2000.

While 100 per cent voluntary, unpaid blood donation is usually found in high-income countries in the Americas region, Cuba and Suriname, both low-income countries, represent the

exceptions as they have introduced 100 per cent voluntary donation since they created their national blood transfusion service.

- In Bolivia, the establishment of a national blood programme and concerted media campaigns run by the government have brought the rate of voluntary, unpaid donations from 10 per cent in 2002 to more than 50 per cent today.

- South Africa has had 100 per cent voluntary, unpaid donation well before it established a national blood service. With HIV prevalence of 23.3 per cent in the adult population, only 0.02 per cent of its regular blood donors are HIV positive.

Voluntary blood donor organizations have been set up in over 50 countries. These organizations, which are managed by blood donors themselves, play an important role in blood donor recruitment and retention through peer education and promotion.

Data collected from WHO's 178 Member States showed that the number of tests not being performed for the four main markers of infection, HIV, HBV (hep B virus), HCV (hep C virus) and syphilis, decreased from 13 million in 1998-99 to just six million in 2000-01 with further reductions since that time.

By 2001, 123 countries were monitoring the prevalence of transfusion-transmissible infections among blood donors, compared with 98 countries in 1998-1999. This has enabled them to focus their blood donor education and recruitment activities on people who are likely to be the safest blood donors, and by 2006 there were around 50 countries totally dependent on 100 per cent voluntary blood donations (a significant improvement of about 25 per cent over five years).

## Facts about blood

- Blood is a rich product which can be broken down into many parts. Its main components are red cells, platelets and plasma, and the plasma itself contains a variety of proteins
- All of these substances have different uses and patients will need different components depending on their own blood type and on their condition. For instance, an anaemic person will only require red cells, while a haemophiliac needs clotting factors from plasma
- Once donated, red cells last only about 35 days and platelets only five days, so a regular supply of fresh blood is vital
- Just half a litre of donated blood can help save as many as three people's lives
- There are four main blood types: A, B, O and AB which can be subdivided into Rh-positive and Rh-negative. AB Rh-positive is the universal recipient, and O Rh-negative is the universal donor.
- Blood centres often run short of type O and B blood
- While a given individual may be unable to donate, he or she may be able to recruit a suitable donor. Blood banks are always in need of volunteers to assist at blood draws or to organize blood drives
- Much of today's medical care depends on a steady supply of blood from healthy donors.

***Once again all of the above should be regarded as ideas, triggers to get you started in planning WBDD events in your country to suit local needs and to help you achieve priority concerns.***

# Contacts

## World Health Organization (WHO)

### WHO Headquarters

**Dr. Neelam Dhingra**
Coordinator, Blood Transfusion Safety
Department of Essential Health Technologies
World Health Organization
20 Avenue Appia
CH-1211 Geneva 27
Switzerland
Fax: +41 22 791 4836
E-mail: bloodsafety@who.int
http://www.who.int/bloodsafety

### WHO Regional Office for Africa

**Dr. Jean-Baptiste Tapko**
Regional Advisor Blood Safety
Division of Health Systems and Services Development
WHO Regional Office for Africa
Boîte postale 6
Brazzaville
Congo
Fax: +47 241 39511
E-mail: tapkoj@afro.who.int
http://www.afro.who.int/bls/

### WHO Regional Office for the Americas/Pan American Health Organization

**Dr. José Ramiro Cruz-Lopez**
Regional Adviser, Blood and Laboratory Services
Pan American Health Organization
525 23rd Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037
USA
Fax: +1 202 974 3610
E-mail: cruzjose@paho.org
http://www.paho.org/spanish/ad/ths/ev/blood-spa.htm

## WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean

**Dr. Nabila Metwalli**
Regional Adviser, Blood Safety, Laboratory & Imaging
WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean
Abdul Razzak Al Sanhouri Street
P.O. Box 7608, Nasr City
Cairo 11371
Egypt
Fax: +20 2 276 5416
E-mail: metwallin@emro.who.int
http://www.emro.who.int/asd/programmeareas-BloodSafety.htm

## WHO Regional Office for Europe

**Dr. Valentina Hafner**
Quality of Health Systems, Division of Country Support
WHO Regional Office for Europe
8 Scherfigsvej
DK-2100 Copenhagen
Denmark
Fax: +45 39 171 875
E-mail: vha@euro.who.int
http://www.euro.who.int/aids/prevention/20031114_1

## WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia

**Dr. Rajesh Bhatia**
Regional Adviser, Blood Safety and Clinical Technology
WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia
World Health House
Indraprastha Estate, Mahatma Gandhi Marg
New Delhi 110 002
India
Fax: +91 11 2337 0197
E-mail: bhatiaraj@searo.who.int
http://searo.who.int/en/section10/section17/section53/section478_1671.htm

## WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific

**Dr. Yu Junping**
Blood Safety Specialist
WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific
P. O. Box 2932
1000 Manila
Philippines
Fax: +63 2 522 2036
E-mail: yuj@wpro.who.int
http://www.wpro.who.int/health_topics/blood_safety/

**Contact details of WHO country offices are available at: http://www.who.int/country**

## International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

**Peter Carolan**
Senior Officer, Health and Care (Blood)
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
P.O. Box 372
1211 Geneva 19
Switzerland
Tel: +41 22 730 4409
Fax: +41 22 733 0395
E-mail: peter.carolan@ifrc.org
http://www.ifrc.org

*For contact details for all the Federation's regional offices, please see http//:www.ifrc.org (and go to the "Who We Are" section).*

## International Federation of Blood Donor Organizations (IFBDO/FIODS)

**Niels Mikkelsen**
President, IFBDO/FIODS
c/o Bloddonorerne i Danmark
Vesterbrogade 191
DK 1800 Frederiksberg C
Denmark
Tel: +45 7013 7014
Mobile: +45 4011 9556
Fax: +45 7013 7010
E-mail: mikkelsen@bloddonor.dk

**Jean-Marie Dunant**
Secretary General, IFBDO/FIODS
Rue du Chateau de la Devèze 1
F 34500 Beziers
France
Tel: +33 4 67 76 52 79
Fax: +33 4 67 76 95 33
Mobile: +33 6 87 51 08 34
E-mail: jean-marie.durant@federation-dondesang.asso.fr

### Continental delegate for Africa

**Farid Belouafi**
Association Marocaine des Donneurs de Sang
c/o Centre National de Transfusion Sanguine
474 Avenue Hassan II
BP 180 Rabat
Maroc
Tel: +212 37 69 14 60
Mobile: +212 61 15 78 48
Fax: +212 37 69 14 63
E-mail: cnts@sante.gov.ma

### Continental delegate for Asia

**Dr. Debrabata Ray**
President, Association of Voluntary Blood Donors of West Bengal
20A Fordyce Lane
700 014 Kolkata
India
Tel: +91 33 473 4484 / +91 33 473 4971, ext.132; +91 33 400 6625
Fax: +91 33 473 2805
E-mail: ray@mahendra.iacs.res.in
http://www.angelfire.com/sc/avbdwb/rakta.html

### Continental delegate for Europe

Vacant

### Continental delegate for North America

Vacant

### Continental delegate for South America

**Leticia Côrtes Ferreira**
Administrative Director, Associacão Brasileira de Voluntarios do Sangue
Rua Aligusta, 41 - Vila Nova Mazzei
São Paulo/SP
Brazil
Tel: +5511 62 03 30 66
Mobile (+55) 11 81 25 03 71
E-mail: leticiaferreir@ig.com.br; Web site: http://www.voluntariosdosangue.org.br

**Contact details of voluntary blood donor organizations are available at: http://www.fiods.org**

## International Society of Blood Transfusion (ISBT)

**Dr. Paul F.W. Strengers**
Secretary General
ISBT Central Office
Jan van Goyenkade 11
1075 HP Amsterdam
The Netherlands
Fax: +31 20 673 7306
E-mail: isbt@eurocongres.com
http://www.isbt-web.org

## Request for listing on World Blood Donor Day web site

*Tell the world about the events planned for 14 June, share your slogans and send in your World Blood Donor Day promotional and educational materials to inform and inspire others!*

Please return this form to:
*mikkelsen@bloddonor.dk*

**Last name:** _____

**First name:** _____

**Title (Mr, Miss, Mrs, Ms, Dr, Prof, etc.):** _____

**Organization:** _____

**Mailing address:** _____

**Telephone (please include country and city codes):** _____

**Fax (please include country and city codes):** _____

**E-mail address:** _____

*Please include my organization on the WBDD electronic mailing list*

**Organization web site:** _____

**Type of organization:** _____

**Government:** _____

**Blood transfusion service:** _____

**Red Cross/Red Crescent Society:** _____

**Voluntary blood donor organization:** _____

**Other voluntary organization (e.g., Rotary Club, Lions Club):** _____

**United Nations agency:** _____

**Non-governmental organization:** _____

**Other (please specify):** _____

**Date(s) of event/activity:** _____

**Location of event/activity: (City, country)** _____

**Other organizations involved in event/activity:** _____

**Description of events/activity (maximum 500 words):** _____

**Web link to further information:** _____

**Description of attached photos/documents (maximum 500 words):** _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

**Slogans for inclusion on web site (with English translation, if possible):** _____

_____

_____

_____

**You can also submit your information online at www.wbdd.org**

# Conclusion

## WBDD and a global strategy for 100 per cent voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation

### Towards 100 per cent voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation:

The four key 'founding' partners of WBDD believe access to safe blood when in need should be a realistic expectation for the world community. Sadly, this is not the case, particularly in the developing world, due largely to a general neglect in the development of national blood programmes and a shortage of voluntary, non-remunerated blood donors.

The voluntary donation of blood is the ultimate humanitarian act which saves the lives of thousands of people every day and results in a significantly improved quality of life for thousands more. It is an altruistic gift and the key partners of WBDD all believe this should never become a marketable commodity. Just as voluntary action in general helps to promote family, community, national and global solidarity, voluntary blood donation underscores global solidarity in respect of a priceless gift …the gift of blood.

At the beginning of this new millennium, the World Health Organization and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies joined forces on the World Health Day of 2000 to emphasize the importance of the individual in a global blood safety campaign. Using the slogan "Safe blood starts with me", they reminded ordinary people that they have a role to play in blood safety by leading healthy lifestyles. At that time, individual action was strongly encouraged as a good investment for oneself and the community. WBDD also builds on the International Blood Donor Day organized annually by FIODS (International Federation of Blood Donor Organizations) since 1995.

More recently, 2005 was a landmark year with endorsement of World Blood Donor Day by the World Health Assembly (WHA 58.13) and this event is now celebrated on 14 June in more than 100 countries: it provides a suitable opportunity for all countries to pay tribute to voluntary blood donors and, in a spirit of global solidarity, remind everyone of the special nature of their role in health care.

**WHO, ISBT, FIODS and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies now wish to extend the focus from individual responsibility to a wider target audience in order to involve other key partners in a global initiative for blood safety.**

Each and every WBDD serves as an open invitation to a broad range of potential partners in a worldwide effort to encourage all countries to embrace the concept of 100 per cent voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation. These partners could in-

clude governments, national health and education authorities, non-governmental organizations, community groups and the corporate sector.

We urge you to join this global movement and to work fervently towards achieving the goal of 100 per cent voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation in your country. We are confident that a new wave of global solidarity, involving your organization or community group, will strengthen the likelihood of realizing this vision.

We hope you will identify your own role and the role of your organization in this global blueprint for change – a change towards 100 per cent voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation!

*We thank you in anticipation of your support.*

# Notes

# Notes

# Notes

**World Health Organization**

**Dr. Neelam Dhingra**
Coordinator,
Blood Transfusion Safety
Department of Essential Health Technologies
World Health Organization
20 Avenue Appia
CH-1211 Geneva 27
Switzerland
Fax: +41 22 791 4836
E-mail: bloodsafety@who.int
http://www.who.int/bloodsafety

**International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**

**Peter Carolan**
Senior Officer,
Health and Care (Blood)
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
P.O. 372
1211 Geneva 19
Switzerland
Tel: +41 22 730 4409
Fax: +41 22 733 0395
E-mail: peter.carolan@ifrc.org
http://www.ifrc.org

**International Federation of Blood Donor Organizations (IFBDO/FIODS)**

**Niels Mikkelsen**
President, IFBDO/FIODS
c/o Bloddonorerne i Danmark
Vesterbrogade 191
DK 1800 Frederiksberg C
Denmark
Tel: +45 7013 7014
Mobile: +45 4011 9556
Fax: +45 7013 7010
E-mail: mikkelsen@bloddonor.dk

**International Society of Blood Transfusion (ISBT)**

**Dr. Paul F.W. Strengers**
Secretary General
ISBT Central Office
Jan van Goyenkade 11
1075 HP Amsterdam
The Netherlands
Fax: +31 20 673 7306
E-mail: isbt@eurocongres.com
http://www.isbt-web.org

The founding partners of this WBDD initiative thank the designers of these guidelines and everyone who contributed with photographs/images

# World Blood Donor Day

"Celebrating your gift of blood" 14 JUNE

949000 02/2007 E 200

www.wbdd.org