

**Message from**

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**WHO EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION**

**on the occasion of**

**WORLD BLOOD DONOR DAY**

**Cairo, Egypt, 14 June 2020**

**Safe blood saves lives**

Every year on 14 June, countries around the world celebrate World Blood Donor Day. This year's campaign, which is marked during the COVID-19 pandemic, focuses on the contribution an individual blood donor can make to improve health for others in their community.

Safe blood is critical to save millions of lives every year. It can help in the proper management of women suffering from bleeding associated with pregnancy and childbirth; children suffering from severe anaemia; patients with inherited disorders such as thalassemia; and victims of trauma due to armed conflict, emergencies, disasters and accidents.

Although the need for safe blood is universal, access remains a privilege of the few. Most low- and middle-income countries in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region struggle to make enough blood available while also ensuring its quality and safety, especially during emergencies. That includes the current COVID-19 pandemic. Blood donation across the Region is essential to ensure individuals and communities have access to blood at all times, as an integral part of health care delivery.

An adequate blood supply can only be ensured through regular donations by voluntary and unpaid blood donors. World Blood Donor Day serves to thank these donors for their life-saving gifts of blood and to raise awareness of the universal need for safe blood in the delivery of health care. Each individual blood donor can make a crucial contribution to help others in their community.

This campaign is a call for action to all governments, national health authorities and national blood services to improve access to blood as part of universal health coverage. They need to provide adequate resources and put in place systems and infrastructure to increase the collection of blood from voluntary, regular unpaid blood donors; provide quality donor care; promote and implement appropriate clinical use of blood; and set up systems for oversight and surveillance across the blood supply and transfusion chain.

Through the campaign, we call on all countries in the Region to celebrate and thank individuals who donate blood, and to encourage those who have not yet donated blood to start donating, to make access to safe blood a reality for everyone in need, especially during the pandemic.

“Give blood and make the world a healthier place.”

Thank you.