

World Blood Donor Day

Message by the Secretary General



*“It gives us great pleasure to announce once again **14 June, 2019 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. **Voluntary Blood donors are cornerstone of a safe and adequate supply of blood and blood products.** The safest blood donors are voluntary, non-remunerated blood donors from low risk populations.*

Family/Replacement donors are supposed to be associated with a significantly higher prevalence of transfusion – transmitted infections (TTIs) including HIC, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, syphilis and malaria. Thus, one of our key strategies to enhance blood safety is to focus on motivating non-remunerated blood donors and phasing out even replacement donors.

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 to the recipients of their blood. It is to these unsung heroes that World Blood Donor Day is dedicated. 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 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.

*It is my pleasure to inform that Indian Red Cross Society, National Headquarters blood bank has achieved 98% voluntary donations. **Hoping to move towards 100% voluntary donation this year”***

R K Jain, IAS (Retd)