



14 June 2014 –2014 World Blood Donor Day's focus is " Safe blood to save mothers". Blood loss during delivery is normal, as all women lose some blood as the placenta separates from the uterus. Unfortunately, some women bleed too much after birth and require special treatment. This excessive blood loss is called a postpartum hemorrhage (PPH) and is the leading cause of maternal mortality worldwide.



Everyday about 800 women die from pregnancy or childbirth-related complications. Timely access to safe blood is essential in all countries, in all health facilities to prevent maternal deaths. Blood transfusion has been identified as one of the nine key life-saving interventions for the management of pregnancy-related complications.

Around 108 million units of donated blood are collected globally every year. Nearly 50% of these blood donations are collected in high-income countries, home to less than 20% of the world's population.

An adequate and reliable supply of safe blood can only be assured through a stable base of regular, voluntary, unpaid blood donors. In 2012, 60 countries collected 100% of blood supply from voluntary unpaid blood donors. But in 72 countries, less than 50% of blood supplies come from voluntary unpaid donors, with much of their blood supply still dependent on family/replacement and paid blood donors.

“When a new mother dies, not only does her baby face greater risk of death, malnourishment and lifelong disadvantage, but the whole family's wellbeing is affected,” says Dr Margaret Chan, WHO Director-General. “If all obstetric facilities provided safe blood for transfusion, many of these mothers' lives could be saved.”