

## **Dr. Mercedes Juan - México Secretary of Health**

### **Message for World Blood Donor Day 2014**

I want to greet all of the countries of the Americas who come together to celebrate the World Donor Day. It is an honor for Mexico to be the country chosen as the host country by the Pan American Health Organization in the Americas, acknowledging the effort made in actualizing the normative framework and compromise, so that available blood is safe and of equal distribution.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) celebrate, since 2005, every 14 of July, the World Donor Day to honor the voluntary and altruistic blood donors, as well as to elevate consciousness about the importance of this type of blood donation, as the safest source for patients.

Every year, WHO chooses a theme for this celebration, and this year's theme is "Safe blood for Saving Mothers" because mother's health is one of the priorities within the Millennium Development Goals.

The universal access to safe blood is a crucial topic for Mexico as well as for all in the Americas. Specially, for the essential role it plays in the maternal and perinatal care since it allows saving lives. In Mexico, approximately 5,000 units of blood are donated daily; this means, around 2 million units each year, which meets the donation rate recommended by the Pan American Health Organization.

Similarly to many countries in our region, we continue the work to make sure that blood comes from altruistic donors that do it frequently, instead of from reposition of families and friends. Our region holds the fourth place in this type of donation, which is why Health Ministers in the Americas should implement mechanisms that allow the appropriate access for patients to safe blood and blood components.

I want to invite all the countries in the American continent to come and support the efforts of the Pan American Health Organization in their campaigns directed to promote the voluntary and altruistic donations that are done frequently. This is through spreading clear and accessible information, intended to motivate the population's active participation to achieve successful blood drives. Implementing a system consisting on voluntary and altruistic donations (done frequently) that include easy, fast and friendly processes to create trust and increase the numbers of voluntary, regular donors little by little.

It is important to donate blood since many of us or our loved ones may need it at any time; safe blood is life and should be waiting for the patient who needs it.

Let's save lives, donate safe blood for saving mothers!