

## **South Sudan commemorates the World Blood Donor Day**

**Juba 15 June, 2018** – *‘I have witnessed it myself that most of our mothers die due to losing a lot of blood after delivery and about 80 percent die because of lack of blood transfusion. So, I felt that I should act as an example to donate blood to save the lives of our mothers’* said Judith a midwife working at Juba Teaching Hospital after donating blood. She appealed to other health workers to volunteer and donate blood to save more lives.

South Sudan joined the rest of the world to commemorate the World Blood donor day on 14 June under the theme **‘Be there for someone else. Give blood. Share life’**. The country has made progress in building infrastructure and creating awareness on voluntary unpaid blood donation. This is in an effort to improve availability of safe blood and blood products, although the demand for blood transfusion still far exceeds the supply. To demonstrate the commitment of the people of South Sudan through voluntary unpaid donations, more than 86 units of blood were collected in Juba on World Donor Day alone.

With funding from the Government of Japan, WHO supports the Ministry of Health to strengthen the National Blood Transfusion Services in South Sudan in the areas of voluntary unpaid blood donor recruitment and retention as well as capacity building to increase blood donations; laboratory testing, processing and screening of all donated blood; appropriate clinical use of blood and blood products and improve availability of safe blood to more hospitals in the country.

H.E. Seiji Okada, Ambassador of Japan to South Sudan, said blood donation is a symbol of the unity of the people because regardless of age, sex, race or tribe, people can use anyone’s blood. Ambassador Okada also committed the people of Japan will continue their strong relationship with the people of South Sudan and support the Ministry of Health and blood transfusion services in the country.

The WHO Representative a.i. for South Sudan Mr Evans Liyosi, who is also a regular blood donor appreciated the able leadership of the Honourable Minister for Health, Dr Riek Gai Kok, in mobilizing partnerships to promote the spirit of giving blood as well as negotiating for facilities for blood transfusion services. He committed WHO’s continued support to provide technical support, standards and guidelines to direct the implementation and roll out of the National Blood Transfusion Services beyond Juba to other regional, state and county hospitals as well as utilizing the moving/virtual blood banks where there are no blood cold chain facilities in order to improve access to all parts of the country. Mr John Lolor, Secretary General of the South Sudan Red Cross also gave good will remarks emphasizing the role of the Red Cross in community mobilization.

Hon Minister of Health, Dr Riek Gai Kok recalled the December 2013 crisis when the country needed a lot of blood and President Uhuru Kenyatta responded to the call of the President of the Republic of South Sudan on 19 December 2013, sending about 90 pints of blood to save lives. ‘Today we came to celebrate the partnership because without blood donors there would be no day like this. We thank you very much our blood donors’. The Minister also appreciated the partners especially the Government of Japan who generously funded the Blood Transfusion Service in this country, with equipment and technical support through the WHO.

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