



## THE PARTNERSHIP

For Maternal, Newborn & Child Health

### **Safe Blood for Safe Motherhood--focus of the Blood Donor Day 2007**

14 June 2007 - World Blood Donor Day 2007 focuses on improving safe blood supply to prevent maternal mortality. Every year, about 125 000 women die in developing countries due to severe bleeding during delivery or after childbirth, making it the most common cause of maternal mortality. This accounts for 25% of global maternal mortality, including 34% of maternal deaths in Africa and 31% in Asia. Timely, appropriate and safe blood transfusion during and after delivery can make the difference between life and death for many women and their newborns.

"The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health recognizes the essential role of safe and rational use of blood in reducing maternal and newborn mortality. Great efforts are needed by all partners to reduce maternal health disparities worldwide," said Dr Francisco Songane, Director of The Partnership, noting that 99% of all maternal deaths occur in developing countries.

"If current trends continue, the world will fail to meet target 5 of the Millennium Development Goals to reduce maternal mortality," said Dr Margaret Chan, WHO Director-General. "We must do everything we can to improve the chances of women during and after childbirth."

During 9-11 June, a global consultation was organized by WHO, the Government of Canada and the Canadian and French blood services. Around 100 experts in transfusion called on governments, international agencies and non-governmental organizations to work together towards universal access to safe blood transfusion by 2015 in support of the Millennium Development Goals to reduce maternal and child mortality and prevent the transmission of HIV, hepatitis and other life-threatening infections through unsafe blood and blood products.

For more information on the World Blood Donor Day 2007, visit <http://www.who.int/worldblooddonorday/> .