

GLOBAL APPEAL 2024

to End Stigma and Discrimination against Persons Affected by Leprosy

WHO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, 31 January 2024

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Leprosy, a disease with ancient origins, still lingers in our world, primarily affecting countries in Asia, Africa and South America. While it is now curable, the enduring stigma and discrimination surrounding leprosy remain barriers to its elimination. Early detection and treatment can prevent physical impairment, but fear of discrimination often keeps people from seeking help. To envision a world without leprosy, we must collectively reject the discrimination that clings to this disease and reach every case. The COVID-19 pandemic made the fight against leprosy harder by disrupting country efforts to control the disease. The World Health Organization (WHO), Sasakawa Leprosy (Hansen's Disease) Initiative (SLI) and partners are working with countries to help rebuild these national efforts and ensure better access to care for all. Our greatest ally in this endeavour will be a well-informed public.

Here's how you can help:

- **Educate Yourself:** Learn the facts about leprosy, its curability, and the importance of early treatment and possible prevention.
- **Encourage Treatment Seeking:** If you come across a suspected case of leprosy, prompt treatment is vital. Treatment is available free of charge. Encourage people to seek help.
- **Reject Discrimination:** Treat everyone with compassion and respect, regardless of their health status.
- **Spread Awareness:** Share accurate information about leprosy and challenge stereotypes within your community.

Together, we can create a world where no one is left behind on account of a treatable disease. Let us break the chains of discrimination, work toward a leprosy-free world, and ensure dignity and care for everyone affected by this disease.



Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
Director-General, World Health Organization



Yohei Sasakawa
WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Leprosy Elimination
Chairman, The Nippon Foundation

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The Global Appeal is an annual event to raise awareness of leprosy and call for an end to the stigma and discrimination that persons affected by the disease continue to face. Launched in 2006 by Yohei Sasakawa, WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Leprosy Elimination and chairman of The Nippon Foundation, the Appeal is issued every January on or near World Leprosy Day on the last Sunday of the month. Each year the Appeal receives the backing of prominent individuals and organizations who lend their voices in support of its message of inclusion. Global Appeal 2024 is the 19th in the series.