

GLOBAL APPEAL 2014

To end stigma and discrimination
against people affected by leprosy

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Endorsed by National Human Rights Institutions

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Leprosy is one of the world's oldest diseases. Caused by a bacillus, it is completely curable today with modern drug therapy. Contrary to widespread belief, leprosy is not hereditary, it is not untreatable, it is not highly infectious and it is not divine punishment.

Yet because of the myths and misconceptions that surround leprosy, discrimination is never far away. This discrimination can limit opportunities for education, employment and marriage. It can restrict access to public services. It can marginalize entire families.

In December 2010, recognizing the disease's devastating social, economic and psychological impact, the U.N. General Assembly adopted a resolution on elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members.

The resolution is accompanied by principles and guidelines and reaffirms that people affected by leprosy and their family members should be treated as individuals with dignity and are entitled to all human rights and fundamental freedoms under customary international law, relevant conventions and national constitutions and laws.

As national human rights institutions, we applaud the U.N. resolution and condemn all leprosy-related human rights violations. We uphold the right of people affected by leprosy to live in dignity, free from discrimination. We pledge our support to help to bring down the remaining barriers of stigma and prejudice that stand in their way.

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