

# FOR THE ELIMINATION OF LEPROSY

## A MESSAGE FROM THE SPECIAL AMBASSADOR

### Where Is the Sense of Urgency?



Visiting a colony in Orissa, India

**L**ast year, as WHO special ambassador for the elimination of leprosy, I made three visits to India, and also went to Madagascar and Angola. I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation to the people I met for their dedicated efforts. Nevertheless, frankly speaking, I strongly feel that a sense of urgency is lacking. We have only two years left in which to achieve the goal of elimination. A lot more needs to be done.

I am urging everyone concerned, from political leaders and medical officers to health workers out in the field, to share their know-how and experience, and maximize their efforts for elimination.

As I repeatedly say, on a journey of 100 miles, after 99 miles we are only just halfway. We have the chance to rid the world of a scourge that has been with us for millennia, yet we are only halfway there.

In order to accomplish the historical achievement of elimination by the end of 2005, the year 2004 will be of crucial importance. Unless we all do our best, this goal will be impossible.

In order to increase public awareness of leprosy, I have been working hard to drive home to political leaders, government officials, journalists and people in general the following three messages: leprosy is curable; free treatment is available; and social discrimination has no place. With these words to guide us, let us go forward together and complete the rest of our journey.

Yohei Sasakawa  
WHO Special Ambassador  
President, The Nippon Foundation

**Leprosy is Curable.**

**Free Treatment is Available.**

**Social Discrimination has no Place.**

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