

# FOR THE Elimination OF Leprosy

- Leprosy is curable
- Free treatment is available
- Social discrimination has no place



Working to ensure that those cured of leprosy can lead normal lives free of stigma must be part of the elimination process.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE GOODWILL AMBASSADOR

### You Are the Main Actors

My life's work is to realize a world without leprosy and rid society of the disease called discrimination. My activities are focused on attaining these objectives.

As a big first step, I am appealing for the cooperation of governments, healthcare providers and NGOs in endemic nations in bringing the number of patients in their countries to below 1 per 10,000 population by the end of 2005 (the goal set by the World Health Organization). Major countries that have yet to do so include India, Brazil, Nepal, Madagascar, Mozambique and Angola.

To achieve elimination, it is necessary to conduct educational and information campaigns that spell out the true facts about leprosy. Specifically, society needs to be told that leprosy is curable, treatment is free and discrimination has no place.

I ask those who have recovered from leprosy to become involved in this effort. You who have suffered the tyranny of social discrimination are in the best position to correct misconceptions.

What you say carries the power of conviction. I know it may be hard to go public because of what you have been through, but the daily discrimination you face as a result of social prejudice is not your fault. It is a disease that afflicts society.

We must fight for the elimination of leprosy, but we must also fight for the human rights of those affected by it. Following my appeal to the UN Sub-Commission on Human Rights, it agreed to investigate leprosy as a human rights issue. By its next meeting in August 2005, a preliminary working paper on discrimination against those affected by leprosy will be published.

All of you are needed in this effort. Be courageous and become involved. You are the main actors; I undertake to give you my support.

Let us work together to go from elimination to eradication, and ensure that everyone touched by leprosy can take his or her rightful place in society.

— Yohei Sasakawa, WHO Goodwill Ambassador

<b>Message</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>India Report</b>	
Health secretaries meet in Goa	<b>2</b>
<b>Human Stories</b>	
Bernard K. Punikai's quest for dignity	<b>3</b>
<b>Interview</b>	
Dr. Jo Robertson on leprosy history	<b>4</b>
<b>Ambassador's Journal</b>	
Visits to Bihar, Goa	<b>6</b>
<b>News</b>	
UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; Yomiuri Prize	<b>8</b>
<b>Letter</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>From the Editors</b>	<b>8</b>