

FOR THE Elimination OF Leprosy

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



Yohei Sasakawa looks on as Ma. Kristina Sacdalan reads out the Global Appeal 2007 in Manila on January 29.

MESSAGE

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From Manila to the World

Nepal's peace process is making headway, with elections scheduled for June. With a return of law and order, a WHO-sponsored seminar last November held out the hope that eliminating leprosy as a public health problem within this year is a possibility. Along with the people of Nepal, I yearn for lasting peace in their country.

Elsewhere, I understand that Brazil is proceeding smoothly toward the elimination milestone. Meanwhile, when Mozambique's President Guebuza visited Japan in January, I lobbied him to make further efforts for leprosy elimination, and promised that I would make my fourth visit to his country in May. I am also planning trips to Tanzania and the D.R. Congo.

The WHO, through its Regional Director for Africa Dr. Sambo, is working hard to help the remaining African countries move beyond elimination. For my part, I am prepared to go to Africa any number of times to ensure that they succeed. The day when every country on earth passes the elimination landmark will represent a major step toward a leprosy-free world.

In the meantime, we must also tackle the issue of discrimination, which continues to blight the lives of people affected by leprosy and their families. Last year, former US President Jimmy Carter, the Dalai Lama and other world leaders joined me in issuing a Global Appeal to end stigma and discrimination. That appeal has been translated into many languages and is displayed at venues all over the world.

At my initiative, a second Global Appeal was launched on January 29 in Manila. This time, my fellow signatories were people affected by leprosy who joined me in issuing a powerful call to end disease-based discrimination. I believe their involvement will have an enormous impact and I commend them for speaking out.

In the words of Global Appeal 2007 that I signed together with these courageous men and women: "Silence on this issue is not acceptable. We urge you to join us in the fight to end this social injustice."

— Yohei Sasakawa, WHO Goodwill Ambassador

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