

FOR THE Elimination OF Leprosy

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



In this dramatic reenactment, local residents are cleared off the island of Culion, the Philippines, in preparation for its new role as a leprosy colony.

A MESSAGE FROM THE GOODWILL AMBASSADOR

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Remembering Dr. J.W. Lee

I was deeply saddened by the sudden death last month of WHO Director-General Dr. Jong-Wook Lee, a comrade in the fight against leprosy. Dr. Lee devoted his life to public health and was involved with leprosy from early in his career. He met his Japanese-born wife at a leprosy sanatorium in South Korea, where she was working as a volunteer.

Among the many diseases that the WHO tackles, Dr. Lee took a special interest in leprosy. It was Dr. Lee who appointed me as WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Leprosy Elimination. In particular, he was concerned about the issue of discrimination.

At this year's World Health Assembly in Geneva, Dr. Lee had been planning to extend my term for a further two years. In the event, I received my letter of appointment from Acting Director-General Anders Nordstrom. At the WHO's request, newly included in my mandate is the reduction of stigma and discrimination suffered by persons affected by leprosy.

My new term as goodwill ambassador has thus begun. I intend to do my utmost to honor the

wishes of the late Dr. Lee and reward the faith he showed in me.

Former WHO Director-General Dr. Halfdan Mahler, in mourning the loss of Dr. Lee, quoted words that I believe are attributable to Dr. Benjamin Mays, an American scholar and social activist.

"The tragedy of life does not lie in not reaching your goal. The tragedy lies in having no goal to reach. It is not a calamity to die with dreams unfulfilled, but it is a calamity not to dream. It is not a disaster to be unable to capture your ideal but it is a disaster to have no ideal to capture. It is not a disgrace not to reach the stars but it is a disgrace to have no stars to reach for. Not failure, but low aim is sin."

As Dr. Mahler said, Dr. Lee had very high aims for the WHO, the organization he served with love and skill. He dedicated his life to building a healthy, happy society.

Let us fulfill one of his cherished wishes, and achieve a world without leprosy.

— Yohei Sasakawa, WHO Goodwill Ambassador

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