

20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

# GLOBAL APPEAL 2025

to End Stigma and Discrimination  
against Persons Affected by Leprosy

Bhubaneswar, India, January 30, 2025



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Leprosy, once feared as an incurable disease, is now treatable with modern medicine. When diagnosed and treated early, it is not disabling.

Also known as Hansen's disease, leprosy is an infectious disease caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium leprae* and mainly affects the skin and peripheral nerves.

Despite advances in treatment, many people with leprosy still face stigma and discrimination due to outdated stereotypes and myths. This fear of rejection often prevents people from seeking diagnosis and treatment, leaving many cases undetected.

As Ministries of Health in leprosy priority countries, we recognize that leprosy is not just a health issue—it is also a social issue. Stigma and discrimination hinder progress toward eliminating the disease and violate the rights of those affected.

We are committed to ensuring that everyone has access to healthcare services without fear of discrimination and are working toward the global goal of zero leprosy by 2030.

Together, let us raise awareness, dispel misconceptions and ensure that no one affected by leprosy is left behind.

## Endorsed by the Ministries of Health in Leprosy Priority Countries



*Global Appeal 2025 coincides with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Nippon Foundation and Sasakawa Health Foundation's partnership with the World Health Organization for a world without leprosy.*



The Global Appeal is an annual event to raise awareness of leprosy and call for an end to the stigma and discrimination that persons affected by the disease continue to face. Launched in 2006 by Yohei Sasakawa, WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Leprosy Elimination and Chairman of The Nippon Foundation, the Appeal is issued every January on or near World Leprosy Day on the last Sunday of the month. Each year the Appeal receives the backing of prominent individuals and organizations who lend their voices in support of its message of inclusion. Global Appeal 2025 is the 20<sup>th</sup> in the series.