**ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST LEPROSY AFFECTED PERSONS AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS**

**Replies to Questionnaire for**

**STATES / NHRIs**

**[JAPAN]**

**1.** Are you aware of the Principles and guidelines for the elimination of discrimination against leprosy affected persons and their family members adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2010 (resolution 65/215)? If yes, how did it come to your attention? If not, what are the reasons?

**The Government of Japan is certainly aware of the Principles and Guidelines for the elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members (the P&G). In fact, the Government is leading an international initiative to address the issues of leprosy discrimination, based on Japan’s experiences. The draft resolution “Elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members” proposed by Japan for three consecutive years from 2008 was unanimously adopted by the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC). In 2010, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) unanimously adopted a resolution to require the governments of the member states to pay due regard to the P&G, which had been proposed by Japan. In 2015, the Government submitted another resolution on leprosy issues to the Human Rights Council, on behalf of a cross-regional core-group, which was also unanimously adopted. As such, the Government is very much aware of the importance of the P&G.**

**Recognizing the importance of disseminating and promoting the P&G, the Government is continuing to address leprosy issues in cooperation with the Goodwill Ambassador for the Human Rights of People Affected by Leprosy commissioned by the Government.**

**2.** What mechanism has the Government put in place to disseminate the Principles and Guidelines to its citizens? e.g. translation into national and local languages; media; or any other mechanism?

**The Government provides a Japanese translation of the key points of the P&G, with a link to the full English text of the P&G on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) website.**

**The human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) work to raise public awareness of the P&G. They hold the “Parent-Child Symposium” on Hansen’s Disease, with the participation of junior high school students as panelists, in the aim of eliminating prejudice and discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and disseminating accurate knowledge of the disease. At this symposium, the human rights bodies of the MOJ distribute the brochure, “principles and guidelines for the elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members (Japanese translation)” compiled by the Center for Human Rights Education and Training (a Public Interest Incorporated Foundation). This brochure is also made available on the website of the Center so that the public can access it freely.**

**3.** Has the Government adopted any policies, action plans or taken any other measures to promote awareness-raising of the issue of discrimination against leprosy affected persons and their family members? If so, please provide details on measures taken.

**The Government has submitted a series of resolutions to raise the issue of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members at the UNHRC and the UNGA. The idea is to ensure that the international community maintains its interest in this issue.**

**At the national level, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) plays a leading role in organizing symposia on the issue of leprosy, distributing an awareness-raising brochure to all first-year junior high school students across Japan, and administering the National Hansen’s Disease Museum (**[**http://www.hansen-dis.jp/16leaf/pdf/leaf\_eng.pdf**](http://www.hansen-dis.jp/16leaf/pdf/leaf_eng.pdf)**) and the Jyu-kanbo National Museum of Detention for Hansen’s Disease Patients.**

**In addition, the human rights bodies of the MOJ conduct various awareness-raising activities aimed at eliminating prejudice and discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and deepening public understanding of the issue under the Basic Plan for Promotion of Human Rights Education and Encouragement.**

**They have carried out various awareness-raising activities, under the slogan of “Eliminate Prejudice and Discrimination against People Living with HIV and Hansen’s Disease Patients”, as one of the annual priority targets of activities for human rights awareness-raising. Aiming at eliminating prejudice and discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and disseminating accurate knowledge of the disease, they had “Parent-Child Symposium” on Hansen’s Disease, with the participation of junior high school students as panelists; and advertisements on the Internet and nationwide newspapers for elementary and junior high school students.**

**The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) also calls on medical schools across Japan to provide accurate medical knowledge on leprosy. At meetings of the Council of Head of National Medical Schools of Japan and on other occasions, MEXT stresses the need to disseminate such knowledge as called for in the report compiled in June 2010 by the recurrence prevention study group based on the recommendations by the Verification Committee Concerning the Hansen's Disease Problem.**

**4.** What actions has your Government taken to modify, repeal or abolish discriminatory laws, policies or practices, including terminating forced segregation, in order to eliminate discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members? Is freedom to choose where to live ensured for persons affected by leprosy and their family members?

**In 1996, the “Hansen’s Disease Prevention Law”, which had formed the basis of previous Japanese policies towards inmates of Hansen’s disease sanatoria, etc., was abolished. Since then, there have been no regulations in place to limit the freedom of persons affected by leprosy or their family members to choose where they wish to live.**

**5.** Are those affected by leprosy and their family members being consulted with and/or actively participating in the decision-making processes that deal with matters related to them?

**Every year, the MHLW and representatives of the persons who have recovered from leprosy meet to discuss issues concerning persons affected by leprosy and their family members and find solutions to them. The MHLW takes the outcomes of the discussions at this annual meeting into account when formulating relevant policies.**

**6**. Do persons affected by leprosy enjoy the following rights fully and equally with others (please check where applicable): ( **√** ) citizenship; ( **√** ) obtaining identity documents; ( **√** ) right to vote; ( **√** ) right to stand for elections; ( **√** ) right to serve the public in any capacity; ( ) others? please specify.

**7.** Do persons affected by leprosy enjoy equal rights with others with regard to (please check where applicable): ( **√** ) work; ( **√** ) education ( **√** ) establishing a family; ( **√** ) access to public places, including hotels, restaurants; and buses, taxis, trains and other forms of public transport; ( **√** ) access to cultural and recreational facilities; ( **√** ) access to places of worship; ( ) others?

**8**. What actions have been taken to promote and protect the human rights of (a) women; (b) children; (c) the elderly; (d) members of other vulnerable groups, who have or have had leprosy, as well as their family members? Please provide details.

**Under the Act on the Promotion of Resolution of Issues Related to Hansen's Disease, the Government has been taking measures to promote the well-being of persons affected by leprosy and their family members and restore their honor.**

**In addition, the human rights bodies of the MOJ have been conducting various awareness-raising activities each year, including those related to human rights issues for women, children and the elderly who have been affected by leprosy, or their family members, under the slogans of “Eliminate Prejudice and Discrimination against People Living with HIV and Hansen’s Disease Patients”, “Protect Women's Rights”, “Protect Children's Rights”, and “Nurture a High Regard for Elderly People”, as the annual priority targets of activities for human rights awareness-rising.**

**The human rights bodies of the MOJ also offer counseling services on all kinds of human rights issues, including those for women, children and elderly persons affected by leprosy and their family members at the MOJ’s Legal Affairs Bureaus and District Legal Affairs Bureaus (50 locations nationwide) and their branches (263 locations nationwide). If the work carried out by these services reveals any suspected cases of human rights infringement, the relevant organs open the investigation and resolution procedures. They then conduct the necessary investigations and take appropriate measures based on the result of their investigations.**

**9**. Has your Government drafted and/or adopted a national action plan to implement the Principles and Guidelines? If yes, please attach a copy. Has your Government established a national committee? If yes, please provide details as to its mandate, size and composition of its members.

**No.**

**10.** What major obstacles, if any, has your Government faced in implementing the Principles and Guidelines for the elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members?

**No major obstacles.**

**11.**  In your view, what follow-up mechanisms should be put in place at the international level to effectively implement the Principles and Guidelines?

**The Government considers it of primary importance to raise awareness of the P&G. The Government thus believes that continued awareness-raising on the importance of implementing the P&G through the Global Appeals and the International Symposia on Leprosy and Human Rights organized by the Nippon Foundation, among other opportunities, constitutes an effective follow-up mechanism.**

**12**. Are there any best-practices that you can share with us regarding actions taken to eliminate discrimination against leprosy affected persons and their family members?

**The Government provides the public with the background to the unanimous adoption of a series of resolutions on the elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members at the UNHRC and the UNGA, together with provisional translations of the full texts of these resolutions and an overview of the P&G, on the MOFA website.**

**Since 2005, the Government has actively organized symposia for the elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members.**

**The MHLW plays a leading role in organizing an annual symposium on leprosy aimed at offering accurate understanding of the disease, eliminating discrimination and prejudice against persons affected by leprosy and their family members, and helping to build a better society where all people can coexist peacefully.**

**The human rights bodies of the MOJ also hold the “Parent-Child Symposium” on Hansen Disease, aimed at eliminating prejudice and discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and disseminating accurate knowledge of the disease under the slogan of “Eliminate Prejudice and Discrimination against People Living with HIV and Hansen’s Disease Patients,” as one of the annual priority targets of activities for human rights awareness-raising. This symposium involves a panel discussion by junior high school students and the showing of an awareness-raising video on leprosy. It also offers an opportunity for elementary and junior high school students and their family members to think about the issue of leprosy. The MOJ’s human rights bodies take this opportunity to distribute their awareness-raising brochures to attendees. They also distribute them to all junior high school first-graders every year.**

**In addition, the MHLW administers two awareness-raising centers: the National Hansen’s Disease Museum (**[**http://www.hansen-dis.jp/16leaf/pdf/leaf\_eng.pdf**](http://www.hansen-dis.jp/16leaf/pdf/leaf_eng.pdf)**) and the Jyu-kanbo National Museum of Detention for Hansen’s Disease Patients.**

**MEXT calls on medical schools across Japan to provide accurate medical knowledge on leprosy. At meetings of the Council of Head of National Medical Schools of Japan and on other occasions, MEXT also stresses the need to disseminate such knowledge as called for in the report compiled in June 2010 by the recurrence prevention study group based on the recommendations by the Verification Committee Concerning the Hansen's Disease Problem.**

\*\*\*\*\*\*