

# Morhan

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## Questionnaire on the subject of elimination of discrimination against leprosy

### MOVIMENTO DE REINTEGRAÇÃO DAS PESSOAS ATINGIDAS PELA HANSENÍASE - BRASIL

1. Are you aware of the Principles and guidelines for the elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy 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?

We are aware about the resolution. As a social movement in Brazil directly linked to the Hansen's disease cause, we were encouraged by the Nippon Foundation and we closely followed the resolution preparation, discussion and adoption.

2. What mechanism has the Government (Federal or State level) 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?

For instance, in Brazil there is no Government initiative to disseminate and translate the resolution. The existing translation to Portuguese in Brazil was made by MORHAN, and in December we will release a material jointly with the Order of Attorneys of Brazil.

3. Have any policies, action plans or any other measures been taken at the national level to promote awareness-raising of the issue of discrimination against leprosy affected persons and their family members? Please provide details on measures taken.

The Federal level initiative is for providing the remedy and indemnification to people who lived in former colonies.

In the Brazilian Congress and Senate, a law is in process to remedy the children who were separated from their parents by the segregation policy.

In the State level, in 3 of the 27 States, there are land tenure regularization policies of the former colonies.

On the issue of Hansen's disease today, we report the educational campaigns and communication materials about the disease as inadequate.

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4. What measures have been taken (Federal or State level) 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?

Regarding the discriminatory laws, in 1990 MORHAN cancelled the last discriminatory Federal law. Today we do not map any discriminatory law. But there are still discriminatory practices; for example in the State of Maranhão, the civil service examinations request a test to Hansen's disease.

On the issue of the former colonies houses, we could regularize it in 2 States and in 1 of them the discussion is in progress. But the State of Goiás recently demolished public buildings and is attempting to remove people to a farther region.

5. Which is the terminology originally used in your native language in respect of persons affected by leprosy? Please also provide, aside from the specific terminology in your native language, a translation of it in English. Are there any popular myths associated with persons affected by leprosy? Please provide a short description.

Hansen's disease – In Brazil the term “Lepra” (Leprosy) was forbidden to be used in Brazilian official documents.

There are many popular and local terms, often linked to the negative image and stigma of the disease. There are popular saints and local legends.

6. 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?

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7. What measures have been taken at the national level to ensure persons affected by leprosy enjoy fully and equally rights with others regarding the rights of citizenship; obtaining identity documents; the right to vote; the right to stand for elections; the right to serve the public in any capacity or other civil and political rights?

In this issue, there are no legal barriers.

8. What measures have been taken to ensure persons affected by leprosy enjoy equal rights with others with regard to the rights to work and 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 or any other economic, social and cultural rights?

Regarding the barrier or problems in order to have these rights exercised, and if it comes to MORHAN awareness, we have reversed these situations through partnerships with human rights entities.

9. 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.

There is no specific action; we use the general existing laws for these vulnerable groups protection.

10. What actions have been taken at the national level with regard to discriminatory, labelling and offensive languages directed at leprosy affected persons?

There is a law that prohibits the use of the term "Lepra" (Leprosy) in the Brazilian official documentation, but it does not provide sanctions, only the destruction of the material with the term written.

11. Have Governments drafted and/or adopted a national action plan to implement the Principles and Guidelines? Please attach a copy. Has a national committee been established? Please provide some details as to its mandate, size and composition of members.

There is no specific Plan or Group adopted.

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12. What major obstacles, if any, have Governments faced in implementing the Principles and Guidelines for the elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members?

There is no barrier, but we still have not noticed a government commitment for this.

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

We believe that international missions of UN countries should be challenged to submit implementation reports and for its adoption in their countries regarding the resolution. The civil society should always be heard about it, issuing parallel reports on the issue.

The funding entities can also have a strategic role in these issues and should be encouraged for that.

14. Are there any concrete measures taken by Governments at different levels that you can share with us regarding actions taken to eliminate discrimination against leprosy affected persons and their family members in your country?

Regarding the former colonies, we highlight the States of Rio de Janeiro and Acre, and the right to housing issue.

Regarding the right to memory, Minas Gerais.

Regarding the remedial policy, we highlight an action of the Union Public Defenders.

15. Please provide identified cases of discrimination experienced by leprosy affected persons and their family members in your country, disaggregated by its different forms, including de facto discrimination.

MORHAN has a database on discrimination cases at work, school and others. Recently we discovered a big public school that was abandoned by professionals and students, showing that, despite the reduction of stigma and prejudice situations denunciations, it still exists strong and latent. It is still as an institutional prejudice and stigma regarding the people affected by the disease.