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

**Questionnaire for**

**NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

**BACKGROUND**

In its resolution A/HRC/29/5, the Human Rights Council requested the Advisory Committee to undertake a study which reviews the implementation of the Principles and Guidelines for the Elimination of Discrimination against PersonsAffected by Leprosy and their Family Members, together with the obstacles thereto, and to submit a report containing practical suggestions for their wider dissemination and more effective implementation and to submit a report at its thirty-fifth session.

The resolution also requests the Advisory Committee, in its elaboration of the report, to take into account the views of Member States and as appropriate relevant international organizations, including the World Health Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and relevant special procedures, national human rights institutions, and non-governmental organizations, as well as the work done on the issue by relevant United Nations bodies, specialized agencies, funds and programmes within their respective mandates.

In this context, the Advisory Committee decided, at its fifteenth session held in August 2015, to establish a drafting group in charge of the preparation of this study.[[1]](#footnote-1)The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information from non-governmental organizations in order to identify the current state of implementation of the Principles and guidelines for the elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members (the Principles and Guidelines); how the Principles and Guidelines apply to different situations in different countries, especially the good practices that may be shared; and the major obstacles to implementation, including views on how best to further strengthen the implementation of the Principles and Guidelines.

**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?

*Yes, I studied 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 order to provide technical support for local partners in Vietnam and Mekong Region countries to raise awareness on the rights of persons with disabilities and persons affected by leprosy.*

**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?

*The Guidelines were not translated entirely into Vietnamese. However, some contents of the Guidelines were cited and mentioned in legal documents issued by Ministry of Health, and were shared with provincial department of health and Provincial Centre for Social Disease Control.*

**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 government of Vietnam issued social policies at national level to promote awareness raising of the issue of discrimination against leprosy affected persons and their family members. However, there is no specific national action plan for awareness raising of the issue of discrimination against leprosy-affected persons. In this context it is worth mentioning that, thanks to years of awareness raising through various media, discrimination against leprosy-affected persons is not a major problematic issue anymore in Vietnam.*

**4.** What measureshave 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?

*The Ministry of Health modified and abolished several legal documents related to leprosy in order to eliminate discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members.*

*Persons affected by leprosy and their family members are free to choose where to live.*

**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.

*In the past, the terminology of “bệnh hủi (leprosy) or “bệnh cùi” (disease of amputee) were used. At present, the popular terminology is “Người bị bệnh phong”(persons affected by leprosy) and is used by health workers and the public.*

**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?

*The government of Vietnam has a policy “The ordinance on grassroots democracy” for encouraging participation of persons affected by leprosy. However, policy implementation is not effective. Not many persons affected by leprosy were consulted and actively participating in the decision-making processes.*

**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?

*The government of Vietnam has issued legal documents (Decision # 91/TTg; Circular # 17/2013 issued by the Minister of the Ministry of Health) to ensure persons affected by leprosy enjoy full and equal rights with others regarding the rights of citizenship; the right to vote; the right to stand for elections (Law on Election); the right to serve the public in any capacity or other civil and political rights.*

*However, the government officials do not practise the policies and legal document properly in reality.*

**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?

*The government of Vietnam has issued legal documents (i.e. Guideline on implementation of National Leprosy Control Program) 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. However, the government officers and organizations do not practise the policies and legal document in reality.*

**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.

*The government of Vietnam has issued law and legal documents to protect the human rights of (a) women (i.e. law on gender equality); (b) children (Law on child care and protection); (c) the elderly (Ordinance on the Elderly); (d) members of other vulnerable groups who have or have had leprosy, as well as their family members. (i.e. law on persons with disability, Decree No 28,.....)*

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

*Ministry of Health worked with WHO in Hanoi to develop guidelines for using language related to persons with disability and persons affected by leprosy.*

**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.

*Yes, the Government had adopted a national action plan to implement the Principles and Guidelines. However, no national committee established.*

**12.** What major obstacles, if any, have Governments faced in implementing the Principles and Guidelinesfor the eliminationof discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members?

*The Governments is facing major obstacles as follows:*

* + *Shortage of human and financial resources for leprosy control*
  + *High rate of persons with leprosy related disability*
  + *Most of the persons affected by leprosy are living in poverty and in rural, low-resource areas where there are many barriers for community integration.*

**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?

*Develop training materials on the Principles and Guidelines*

*Train CBR facilitators and social workers about the Principles and Guidelines.*

**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?

*At the national level, the government issued a Circular on Code of conduct (Circular # 07/2014/TT/BYT; Circular #17/2013 of Ministry of Health) to ensure quality of services and respect the rights of patients including persons affected by leprosy. The Circulars also pointed out some suggestions to eliminate discrimination against persons affected by leprosy.*

*At provincial level, Department of Health provided guideline on service standards that require health workers and service providers to respect patients.*

**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.

*Even though there is not much discrimination against persons affected by leprosy- anymore in Vietnam, still quite often persons affected by leprosy are afraid of discrimination and being stigmatized and try not to disclose their health situation.*

**Deadline for submission of responses:**

All parties are encouraged to submit their responses via email or fax as soon as possible but no later than **30December 2015** to:

[**hrcadvisorycommittee@ohchr.org**](mailto:hrcadvisorycommittee@ohchr.org)[Subject: HRCAC Elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy]

or

Secretariat of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee

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Thank you in advance for your contribution.

For more information about the Advisory Committee, please visit <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/AdvisoryCommittee/Pages/HRCACIndex.aspx>

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1. A/HRC/AC/15/L.3 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)