

**Extended Abstract**

## Global leprosy scenario and vision beyond 2010

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Though there has been substantial reduction in the disease burden of leprosy due to registered prevalence brought about by a well-designed strategy and unified effort, new cases will continue to appear, possibly in smaller numbers, for many more years or even decades to come. Today, the diagnosis and treatment of leprosy is simple and is available free of charge at the nearest health centre. There are expectations that persons affected by leprosy and their families do not have to carry the devastating burden caused by the disease without hope. Our challenge is to sustain the quality of leprosy services and to ensure that all persons affected by leprosy, wherever they live, have an equal opportunity to be diagnosed and treated by competent health workers without unnecessary delays and at an affordable cost. To achieve this goal, the major thrust of our efforts must focus on integrating leprosy into the general health services. Health workers at all levels must be taught the simple methods required to diagnose and manage leprosy. This will improve access to leprosy services and reduce the stigma and discrimination faced by persons affected by the disease.

The World Health Organization's Enhanced Global Strategy for Further Reducing the Disease Burden Due to Leprosy: 2011-2015 focuses on sustaining

the gains made so far and on reducing the disease burden further in all endemic communities. At the same time, particular attention should be given to ensuring that the quality of services is not compromised. Every person affected by leprosy should have easy access to diagnosis and free treatment with multidrug therapy. We need to ensure that sustainable activities are carried out and quality services provided within an integrated set-up that includes an effective referral network to manage leprosy-related complications effectively. The implementation of the Enhanced Global Strategy through these updated operational guidelines will require renewed commitment from all partners, notably the of endemic countries and the NGOs working towards the common goal of a world without leprosy. Together, we can further reduce the disease burden due to leprosy and ensure that the physical and social consequences of the disease continue to decline in Magnitude throughout the world.

### References

1. World Health Organization (2009). Enhanced global strategy for further reducing the disease burden due to leprosy 2011-2015. SEA-GLP-2009 3.
2. World Health Organization (2009). *Weekly Epidemiol Record*. **33**: 333-340.

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