

Japan's Reply to the Questionnaire  
for the thematic report to the Human Rights Council (47th session, June 2021)

**1. Please provide information on measures, including laws, affirmative policies and public-private partnerships, taken to guarantee equal job opportunities to persons affected by leprosy and their family members and ensure their right to decent work and inclusion in the formal labor market.**

First, Hansen's disease is a rare disease in Japan. On this premise, we would like to note that with regards to persons affected by Hansen's disease and their family members, the Act on Promotion of Resolution of Issues Related to Hansen's Disease (Act No. 82 of 2008, hereafter referred to as "the Promotion Act"), as basic principles, stipulates that no person shall act in a manner that discriminates against, or that infringes on any right or interest of, persons who were Hansen's disease patients, etc., on the basis that such persons were formerly Hansen's disease patients or currently have Hansen's disease, or that they are family members of persons who were formerly Hansen's disease patients or currently have Hansen's disease.

In addition, the Promotion Act envisages that in formulating and implementing measures regarding Hansen's disease-related issues, the national government shall take the necessary measures such as having consultations with persons who were Hansen's disease patients, etc., and other relevant persons, to reflect their opinions. In accordance with this provision, the national government (the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare) annually conducts consultations with persons who were Hansen's disease patients. Based on these consultations' outcomes, it carries out measures regarding Hansen's disease-related issues, including awareness-raising activities and support for rehabilitation.

Furthermore, if the government (the Ministry of Justice) recognizes a case where a human rights violation concerning discrimination in employment is suspected through human rights counseling, etc., with former patients of Hansen's disease and their family members, it is to immediately conduct an investigation as a human rights violation case and take appropriate measures on a case-by-case basis.

**2. Please provide information on social benefits put in place to respond specifically to the humanitarian crisis faced by persons affected and their families as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.**

The Promotion Act envisages that in formulating and implementing measures

regarding Hansen's disease-related issues, the national government shall take the necessary measures such as having consultations with persons who were Hansen's disease patients, etc., and other relevant persons, to reflect their opinions. In accordance with this provision, the national government (the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare) annually conducts consultations with persons who were Hansen's disease patients. Most recently, such a consultation was held on 29 October 2020, and no participants indicated that persons affected by Hansen's disease and their family members have faced a humanitarian crisis as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Regardless of the outcomes above, with regards to persons who were Hansen's disease patients, the government has been implementing measures regarding Hansen's disease-related issues, including awareness-raising activities and support for rehabilitation, and will continue to carry out these measures.

**3. Please provide information on how the situation of persons affected by leprosy and their family members is taken into consideration in your COVID-19 recovery plans.**

In its preamble, the Act on the Prevention of Infectious Diseases and Medical Care for Patients with Infectious Diseases (Act No. 114 of 1998, hereafter referred to as "the Infectious Diseases Act") stipulates: "in the past in Japan there was groundless discrimination or prejudice against patients suffering from leprosy, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), and other infectious diseases, and those suffering from similar illness. The Japanese public must take these facts seriously and apply them as a moral lesson for the future." Article 4 of the Infectious Diseases Act provides that "[t]he public must endeavor to acquire accurate knowledge on infectious diseases and to exercise vigilance in order to prevent infectious diseases, and must give due regard so as not to infringe on the human rights of patients with infectious diseases and other persons placed in similar circumstances."

Moreover, the Promotion Act envisages that in formulating and implementing measures regarding Hansen's disease-related issues, the national government shall take the necessary measures such as having consultations with persons who were Hansen's disease patients, etc., and other relevant persons, to reflect their opinions. In accordance with this provision, the national government (the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare) annually conducts consultations with persons who were Hansen's disease patients.

In addition to the abovementioned consultations, as prevention measures against COVID-19 at national Hansen's disease sanatoriums, basic measures to prevent the virus

from spreading into the sanatoriums have been taken, including thorough health monitoring of residents and calls for wearing masks, and restrictions on social events and meetings inside the sanatoriums to avoid contact with people from outside. Moreover, budgetary measures for infection prevention have been carried out.