

**UN Special Rapporteur on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Persons Affected
by Leprosy and their Family Members**

1. The Constitution of Mauritius provides an unequivocal right for every citizen to be treated equally and to live a life free from discrimination. As such, there is no discrimination against persons affected from leprosy and their family members.
2. Leprosy has a low prevalence rate in Mauritius. It has been less than 1 case for 10,000 inhabitants for the last 5 years and only 8 confirmed cases have been reported during that period. No new child cases were confirmed for 10 years from 2008 to 2018.
3. People suffering from leprosy enjoy all the rights that any individual enjoys under the laws of Mauritius. There is an array of legislation that affords protection to every citizen against discrimination and such protection also include persons affected by any kind of ailment or disability. Moreover, there is a strong legal framework in place which ensures that legal protection is afforded to any person alleging a violation of their human rights.
4. The State of Mauritius already had provided information on the legal framework, the preventive measures against leprosy, the challenges and the protection of persons living in vulnerable situations, regarding the Elimination of Discrimination Against Persons Affected by Leprosy and their Family Members in a questionnaire in January 2020. Copy of the document is at *Annex A*.
5. The State of Mauritius, likewise to most of the countries worldwide, has not been spared by COVID-19. However, the island has been amongst the very first African country and amongst the first 10 States in the world that have successfully controlled COVID-19. It is currently COVID- SAFE. The few positive cases (21 cases as at 09 00 hours on 13 January 2021) which are under treatment are all imported ones. The success of Mauritius has been mainly achieved due to the strong leadership of Government, the unconditional contribution of our public officers in the front line and the solidarity and cooperation of the population.

6. The State of Mauritius was in total confinement from period 20 March to 30 May 2020, following which economic activities have resumed in phases. During the confinement period, besides the hospitals, all the 140 PHC institutions (Mediclinics/AHCs/CHCs) which are spread out across the country have been kept operational providing a first line health service to the population. Services were also delivered at the doorstep of citizens, such as the vaccination of elderly persons against flu. Moreover, emergency services were also provided to any patient requiring same (including any person suffering from leprosy) with the assistance of the Mauritius Police Force.
7. A 24/7 Hotline service was also launched on 20 March 2020 by the Ministry of Health and Wellness for assistance on health issues. It supported the health personnel not only to attend to COVID-19 related medical queries but also in guiding and alleviating the fear and anxieties of the callers during this stressful period of confinement. The Hotline service has also helped in linking patients to other vital services such as the Rapid Response Team, the Contact Tracing Team and the Home Visit Services.
8. During the confinement period, various sensitization campaigns were carried out on TV/Radio and other online means regarding the sanitary precautions including social distancing, wearing of mask and regular hand washing. The National Communication Committee on Covid-19 held also daily press briefings to update the population about the pandemic situation in Mauritius.
9. As from the lifting of the confinement period, leprosy patients have been called upon to resume their treatment at the Skin Unit of Victoria Hospital. Their conditions were assessed and necessary usual treatment were prescribed to them accordingly. They have been also reminded to keep adopting the basic sanitary measures.

Conclusion

10. Mauritius recognizes that the good health of its citizens is key to achieving high quality of life and wellness. Primary, secondary and specialized medical treatment is free in Public Medical Institutions. All citizens including leprosy patients benefit from those free health services. Continuous efforts will be pursued to ensure the best possible health care to the citizens.

13/01/2021