

Statement by The International Federation of Anti-Leprosy Associations (ILEP)

47th Session of the Human Rights Council

Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members

ILEP is a consortium of NGOs working in 60 countries towards the vision of a world without leprosy. We recognise the extensive consultation undertaken by the Special Rapporteur and welcome her report.

Through centuries of denial of rights and stigmatisation, people affected by leprosy are amongst the most left behind in our world. Pre-existing issues of social exclusion, poverty and poor health outcomes have been dramatically worsened through the pandemic. We have seen delays in diagnosis and treatment, adding serious risk of disability, failure of social protection systems to reach those who most need them, lack of access to information, loss of livelihoods, and denial of Covid vaccines. To build back better, States must ensure that social safety nets support persons affected by leprosy and other vulnerable populations.

ILEP supports the recommendations in the Special Rapporteur's report. We stress the need for States to guarantee an end to the chronic discrimination that people affected by leprosy experience in accessing the full spectrum of health care, including leprosy diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation and mental health services. We stress the need for a whole-of-government approach to eliminate barriers to education and to the right to work especially in the formal economy. And we stress the need for States to work closely with organisations of persons affected by leprosy to gain an understanding of these realities and work to remedy them.

Thank you