AN INCLUSIVE RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO LEPROSY

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LEPROSY and HUMAN RIGHTS

The human rights that pertain to people affected by leprosy should not be seen as relating only to health or disability.

People affected by leprosy have the same human rights as all people.
Covenants, conventions and resolutions

- Leprosy and the ICSECR
- Leprosy and the UNCRPD
- Leprosy and UN General Assembly Resolution 65/215
Perhaps the most appropriate instrument to utilise remains the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966).

- Almost all the articles of this Covenant can be seen to remain unfulfilled for people who have been affected by leprosy.
• United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities

• In force since May 2008

• 156 signatories and 134 ratifications
United Nations Resolution

- In December 2010, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution on “Elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members.”
Specific practical strategies are needed to promote the obligations of States to respect, protect, fulfil and promote the rights enshrined in these Covenants, Conventions and Resolutions.
Three Key Strategies

• Legislative reform
• Knowing your rights
• Working together
Changing Discriminatory Laws

• Positive work is underway in a number of countries to challenge anti-leprosy legislation

• Some successes have already been reported e.g. in Bangladesh.
Knowing your Rights

- Vital for each and every new leprosy patient to be aware of their rights
- This holds true for those who are no longer patients but who continue to face the effects of impairments, stigma and discrimination
- Concept of a “Charter” for persons affected based on the model of the TB patients’ charter
Collaboration

• Knocking on doors
• Joining voices
• Getting heard
• Making a difference