TOWARDS THE ELIMINATION OF LEPROSY

The Fortieth World Health Assembly,

Recalling resolution WHA32.39 and previous resolutions of the Health Assembly and the Executive Board regarding leprosy;

Noting:

(a) the increasing commitment of several Member States to eliminate leprosy as a public health problem in their countries, as part of their goal of health for all by the year 2000;

(b) the significant progress made in recent years in leprosy treatment, including the use of new drugs in multidrug therapy, which has made leprosy treatment far more effective;

(c) the very promising research advances being made towards the development of early diagnosis, immunology and vaccines, leading to effective leprosy prevention programmes;

(d) the increasing role being played by nongovernmental organizations in leprosy control;

1. URGES Member States with endemic leprosy:

(1) to allocate adequate priority to and resources for leprosy control within their public health services as part of primary health care;

(2) to strengthen health education through the media and community participation with a view to overcoming the stigma and phobias traditionally associated with the disease in many societies, and to institute adequate legal guarantees protecting the rights of cured leprosy patients;

(3) to provide improved training in leprosy for health workers of all categories, and especially those working in the field of leprosy, to ensure early case-finding, accurate diagnosis, and the implementation of multidrug therapy programmes;

(4) to institute active programmes, including research, for the rehabilitation of leprosy patients who have acquired disabilities and deformities;

(5) to work out a system of awards, prizes and rewards for outstanding contributions to leprosy control and research.
2. REQUESTS the Director-General:

(1) to continue the successful technical and scientific guidance to Member States and to support their multidrug therapy programmes for leprosy control;

(2) to intensify the Organization's activities in leprosy control by additional mobilization and coordination of scientific and material resources directed at implementing multidrug therapy, rehabilitation and training;

(3) to strengthen support for the development of more effective tools against leprosy through multidisciplinary research in both the natural and social sciences;

(4) to intensify the search for improved drugs and vaccines through the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases;

(5) to promote further the partnership approach between nongovernmental organizations, Member States and WHO to achieve leprosy control and rehabilitation where necessary;

(6) to keep the Executive Board and the Health Assembly informed of the progress made.

Twelfth plenary meeting, 15 May 1987
A40/VR/12