

NEWS and NOTES

This department furnishes information concerning institutions, organizations, and individuals engaged in work on leprosy and other mycobacterial diseases, and makes note of scientific meetings and other matters of interest.

Notice. Several extra copies of the old issues of *The International Journal of Leprosy* are available from the business office. Due to a shortage of storage space, some of these must be discarded soon. If you wish to obtain any of these back issues of the JOURNAL, please contact Dr. Paul Saunderson by e-mail: psaunderson@leprosy.org.

Notice. *The International Journal of Leprosy* is now available on-line by visiting our website at <http://www.leprosy-ila.org/>. This provides the most convenient access to the JOURNAL on-line. You can also renew your membership, or join if you are not already a member of the ILA. The JOURNAL will accept submissions electronically, as well.

A New Atlas of Leprosy. *A New Atlas of Leprosy*, by AC McDougall and Yo Yuasa (2000) is now available on CD-ROM version (December 2002), including both HTML and PDF versions. This has been produced as part of the Health Development series by e-Teaching-aids At Low Cost (TALC) from the UK. The CD is available free, and can be obtained from the TALC office : e-TALC, Unit 13, Standingford House, Cave Street, Oxford, OX4, 1BA, UK. E-mail: info@e-talc.org

3rd Annual GAEL Meeting (From the WHO Special Ambassador's Newsletter, Yohei Sasakawa). From February 6 to 8, 2003, the Third Annual Meeting of the Global Alliance for the Elimination of Leprosy (GAEL) was held in Yangon, Myanmar. The meeting was organized by the World Health Organization, funded by The Nippon Foundation, and hosted by the Min-

istry of Health of the Government of the Union of Myanmar.

GAEL was created in November 1999 by WHO as a way to coordinate leprosy elimination efforts around the world, and thus achieve WHO's goal of eliminating the disease as a public health problem (reducing its incidence to less than one patient per 10,000 people in the population) in every country of the world by the year 2005. Included are the governments of endemic countries, WHO, The Nippon Foundation/Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation, Novartis/Novartis Foundation for Sustainable Development, Danish International Development Assistance (DANIDA), the World Bank, Handicap International, and many national NGO's, such as Pastoral da Crianca and MORHAN, both of Brazil. Additionally, the positions of chair and vice chair rotate annually through the group; this time, the chairmanship was passed from Brazil to Myanmar, while the vice-chairmanship went from Nepal to Mozambique. In this way, every country in the group receives a chance to lead and thus is encouraged to take an active role. By coordinating the efforts of all of these groups, WHO is confident that its 2005 goal will be attainable. Indeed, since the formation of the group, the number of endemic countries has fallen dramatically.

To conclude the meeting and lay the groundwork for future efforts, a document was drawn up, entitled "The Yangon Declaration." This paper set forth the tenets of the Third Meeting, chief among these were:

- an endorsement of the strategic plan, with emphasis on the fact that integration of treatment services and a change in leprosy's negative image are necessary;
- an acknowledgement that only 12 endemic countries remain and that special efforts should be made to help them reach the 2005 deadline;

- thanks to a special ambassador for his work; and
- an acknowledgement that services to women and many underprivileged groups remain insufficient.

A complete copy of this paper can be found at The Nippon Foundation's home page, www.nippon-foundation.or.jp/eng/.

Leprosy Elimination Inches Closer (from: **B. DeSarkar, *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 2003, 81(2)**). India has recently been oscillating between good and bad news on its bid to defeat leprosy. The Indian government has effectively curbed the disease in many parts of the country, but health experts believe that it may not be able to "eliminate" it from India within the next 3 years as planned. Elimination has been defined for the purposes of the global campaign to defeat leprosy as bringing prevalence down to below one case per 10,000 people.

The government announced in December

2002 that it had brought down the leprosy prevalence dramatically from 57.6 per 10,000 people in 1981, to 4.2 per 10,000 people currently. According to government figures, there were 440,000 leprosy patients in the country in April 2002. "We hope to eliminate leprosy by 2004–2005," said Ashok Kumar, the head of the Leprosy Division of the government of India's health services.

The campaign is now being intensified in the east, where three states—Bihar, Jharkhand, and Orissa—have a prevalence of more than 8 per 10,000 people.

New WHO-TDR Research Award (from, ***TDR News*, No. 69, November 2002**). A20201 Melese Getu Kettele, Addis Ababa University, College of Social Sciences, Department of Sociology, Ethiopia. Gender differentials in access to treatment & rehabilitation of leprosy patients in two zonal towns of Ethiopia (budget: US\$ 22,575).

Calendar of Meetings and Events

Day	mm/yy	Location	Details	Contact	e-mail
3-6	Jun-03	London	ILEP Mid-Year Meeting	ILEP Secretariat	ilep@ilep.org.uk
21-22	Jun-03	Genoa	XII Leprosy Course/University of Genoa	AIFO	antonio.landolfi@aifo.it
17-19	Sep-03	Montreal	TB Vaccines for the World	John Herriot	Jherriot@meetingsmgmt.u-net.com
21-23	Sep-03	Toronto	43rd Interscience Conference, American Society for Microbiology	ASM Conferences	meetingsinfo.asmtusa.org
26	Sep-03	London	ILEP Standing Committee	ILEP Secretariat	ilep@ilep.org.uk
	Oct-03	San Francisco	41st Annual Meeting of Infectious Disease Society of America	Phil Bolin	info@idsociety.org
15-18	Oct-03	Barcelona	European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology Congress	EADV	congesos@atlantaviajes.es
16-19	Oct-03	Genoa	3rd International Meeting on Antimicrobial Chemotherapy in Clinical Patients		mattba@tin.it
17-20	Oct-03	Rhodes	5th Congress of Chemotherapy and Infections	Congress Secretariat	ecc5@congress.se
9-13	Dec-03	Valencia	ILEP Working Session and General Assembly	ILEP Secretariat	ilep@ilep.org.uk