

### **About public health strategy in leprosy – quick facts**

Leprosy control programs have shown impressive achievements during the past three decades. With the introduction of Multi-Drug Therapy (MDT) the *registered prevalence* of leprosy, globally, decreased from more than five million people in the mid-1980s to around 200,000 in 2015. More than 16 million people have been treated since then.

Leprosy is not considered to be a public health problem when less than one registered person affected by leprosy per 10,000 head of population is reported. This figure was achieved at a global level in 2000 and by 2005 most countries had achieved this target.

However, these statistics hide the reality that there are still some countries which are highly endemic for leprosy or have highly endemic pockets. The continued decline in global prevalence rate has not led to the disappearance of the disease in many locations. As a result, many people still have leprosy and it is being actively passed on to others in their communities.

Leprosy was diagnosed in 106 countries worldwide in 2015. Evidence of recent transmission can be seen in the diagnosis of leprosy in children in many settings. In 2015, 18,976 children were diagnosed with leprosy. Alarming, a proportion of children diagnosed were found to have already visible impairments which indicates the late detection of leprosy. The number of people newly diagnosed with leprosy and people newly diagnosed with visible and substantial impairments highlights the urgent need for special action to detect all people affected with leprosy. This means scaling up and improving leprosy services.

### **About countries where leprosy is highly endemic or with highly endemic pockets**

There are 14 countries worldwide where 95% of all new leprosy patients are reported: Bangladesh, Brazil, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Madagascar, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Philippines, Sri Lanka and United Republic of Tanzania. Brazil, India and Indonesia account for 81% of new leprosy patients globally. India alone accounts for 60%. Sources include:

[World Health Organization website](#), [World Health Organization Weekly epidemiological record 2 September 2016](#).



**ZERO**  
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