Save the Date: The 20th International Leprosy Congress will be held from 10th to 13th September, 2019, in Manila, Philippines

After “Hidden Challenges” in Brussels in 2013 and “Unfinished Business” in China in 2016, the 20th International Leprosy Congress definitely gives us the opportunity to turn to future challenges with ambition and realism. After discussions with the Philippines authorities, the International Leprosy Association (ILA) is pleased to announce the organization of the upcoming International Leprosy Congress from 10th to 13th September, 2019 in Manila, Philippines.

Since the introduction of effective multi-drug therapy (MDT) some 30 years ago, the prevalence rate of leprosy has been reduced by 95%. In contrast, the number of people reported with newly diagnosed leprosy has consistently remained above 200,000 per year over the past decade. Yet new scientific advances and strategic approaches have brought the vision of “zero leprosy” into focus. They have created a sense of urgency to accelerate progress towards this vision and have clarified the need to work collaboratively in innovative ways. The World Health Organization Global Leprosy Strategy 2016–2020 now includes in its vision statement “zero transmission of leprosy infection”.

There is no doubt that the global picture of leprosy is different than it was 30 years ago.

In this new context, innovative approaches and initiatives are necessary for truly stopping leprosy transmission, preventing disability, and promoting inclusion.

The 20th International Leprosy Congress is a privileged opportunity for scientists, researchers, health staff, partners and individuals affected by leprosy to interact, discuss and share experiences in a variety of fields.

Taking into account these different elements, this Congress, resolutely turned towards “Future Challenges”, has as its main objectives to:

- Review progress made in implementing the 2016–2010 WHO strategic plan since the 19th ILC in China
- Foster a global partnership to stop the transmission of leprosy.

This partnership is meant to be inclusive in order to pool all resources, all opportunities and to achieve the ambitious goal of stopping the transmission of leprosy.

Full details of the congress will be provided later.

Dr. Roch Christian Johnson,
President, International Leprosy Association