



Photo credit: The Leprosy Mission Trust India

What is the Global Partnership for Zero Leprosy?

The Global Partnership for Zero Leprosy is a coalition committed to realizing a world free of leprosy, also known as Hansen's disease.

The Global Partnership for Zero Leprosy was established by several leading leprosy organizations, including the Novartis Foundation, the International Federation of Anti-Leprosy Associations (ILEP), and the International Association for Integration, Dignity and Economic Advancement (IDEA), with representation from national leprosy programs, scientific organizations and the academic community, and with support from the World Health Organization (WHO). The secretariat for the Global Partnership is hosted by the Task Force for Global Health. For more information, visit www.zeroleprosy.org.

What will the partnership do?

Initially, the Global Partnership for Zero Leprosy will coordinate action in three key areas:

1. Accelerating research in new diagnostic and therapeutic tools, interventions, and strategies to interrupt leprosy transmission.
2. Working with national leprosy programs to scale up promising innovations.
3. Increasing advocacy and fundraising.

How was the partnership formed?

After discussions at the International Leprosy Congress in Beijing, the Novartis Foundation held a steering committee meeting in February 2017. The steering committee's aims were to determine the feasibility, scope, structure and priorities of a global partnership. The Novartis Foundation and the steering committee engaged the Task Force for Global Health to conduct a stakeholder analysis in April-June 2017. With the vast majority

of stakeholders supporting a global partnership, the steering committee reconvened in August 2017 to develop plans to move the partnership forward. The Global Partnership for Zero Leprosy was publicly announced in January 2018, just ahead of World Leprosy Day.

What is the structure of the partnership?

The partnership has four organizational components:

1. Leadership team
2. Working groups
3. Secretariat
4. Partners

The leadership team provides strategic direction, oversight and guidance for the partnership. Two working groups are in development. One group will facilitate scientific research to develop and evaluate diagnostic tests, strategies, and interventions that, based on emerging evidence, will contribute to zero leprosy. Another group will facilitate the uptake, scale-up, monitoring, and evaluation of best practices and promising innovations in national leprosy control programs.

The secretariat manages the daily operations of the partnership, along with external communications and fundraising. Organizations that support the principles of the Global Partnership for Zero Leprosy are invited to join as partners.

What's new about this initiative? How is it different from "business as usual"?

Two things are new. First, scientific breakthroughs in diagnosis and prevention have sparked new hope that we can achieve the goal of zero new cases of leprosy. Second, the Global partnership will build on and strengthen existing collaborative networks to support leprosy programs as they adopt and scale up these promising new tools and approaches.

How are you ensuring the voices of persons affected, who are often from under-developed regions and whose voices have often been marginalised, are heard in the partnership?

The partnership endorses the full participation of persons affected by leprosy, which includes representation on the Leadership Team and involvement in all working groups and committees.

What is your time frame for achieving zero leprosy?

We have learned from other disease elimination programs that it is virtually impossible to accurately predict when “zero” will be achieved. We are joining forces to achieve our shared goal of zero leprosy as efficiently, thoroughly, and quickly as possible.

What does “zero leprosy” mean?

Broadly speaking, “zero leprosy” refers to “zero transmission, zero disability, and zero discrimination.” Zero transmission, an initial focus of the partnership, means no new cases of leprosy despite active efforts to find them.

You said the Task Force for Global Health is hosting the secretariat for the partnership. Can you tell me more about them?

The Task Force for Global Health is a non-governmental organization based in Decatur, Georgia, USA. The Task Force works to improve health conditions for vulnerable populations



Photo credit: Lepra

around the world, especially people living in poverty. Task Force programs focus on controlling and eliminating debilitating diseases and building durable systems that protect and promote health. For more information, please go to www.taskforce.org.

How can my organization join?

This partnership will continue to expand and engage members from national leprosy programs, the scientific and academic communities, organizations of persons affected by leprosy, and non-governmental organizations. If you are interested in joining the partnership, please contact Ms. Courtenay Dusenbury, Secretariat Director, at cdusenbury@taskforce.org.