

WELCOME TO THE XIII INTERNATIONAL LEPROSY CONGRESS

In the message conveyed by me in the "Final Announcement" of the Congress I emphasized the need for a regular recurring International Meeting on Leprosy. This is in order to establish a firm international communication network between many widely diversified scientific and other disciplinary groups engaged in many countries in the prevention, diagnosis, cure and care of leprosy.

It is gratifying and stimulating for me to address on behalf of the Organizing Committee a few words of welcome to you.

We wish you a stimulating week, productive in enlarging your own field of knowledge and interest in the widely diverging aspects of leprosy. We hope that each of you for his or her part will also contribute actively to the meetings and that in this process you will establish firm and lasting contacts with colleagues in your own field from all over the world.

The best reward for the members of my Committee, who put so much effort in the preparation of this Congress, will be you returning to your own country with a refreshed stimulation to achieve optimal results in your work on leprosy.

Hans H. Cohen
Chairman, Organizing Committee

There is no doubt that leprosy today is at a turning point.

Recent developments in immunology and molecular biology have opened new fields of study regarding both the defense mechanisms of the host and the intimate structure of the leprosy bacillus, revealing new approaches to the possible development of a vaccine. Emergence of resistant strains of bacilli has been met with new regimes of chemotherapy, creating a different set of logistics and raising great challenges to program managers.

An effective leprosy control requires close links with primary health care at all levels. It calls for community participation and integration into general health services. There is a renewed concern for the leprosy patient and an urgent need to tackle social and community problems.

The International Leprosy Association is particularly grateful to the ILA Congress 1988 Foundation of The Netherlands and to The Netherlands Leprosy Relief Association, a member of ILEP (International Federation of Anti-Leprosy Associations) for being the host of this Congress.

We are convinced that all of you concerned with leprosy and leprosy patients from every part of the world will find this Congress a great opportunity to exchange views and to learn about recent advances in the science of leprosy and to obtain a new stimulus in your work.

Michel F. Lechat
President, International Leprosy Association

The Netherlands Leprosy Relief Association is honored to welcome you in The Netherlands on the occasion of the XIII International Leprosy Congress. On behalf of the Association I have great pleasure in extending my greetings to all participants and I hope that the Congress will be very successful. It is my sincere wish that this Congress will contribute to the final eradication of leprosy.

E. Veder-Smit
President, Netherlands Leprosy Relief Association