

INTRODUCTION

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On behalf of the Committee of the National Health Development Network of Ethiopia (NHDN-E) and on my own behalf, I would like to welcome you all to this symposium on the "Control of Chronic Communicable Diseases and Primary Health Care" which will focus on Leprosy and Tuberculosis.

The main objective of the NHDN-E is to provide technical support to the national effort for the achievement of "Health for All by the Year 2000" through the promotion of the primary health care approach in all possible ways. One of these ways is by organizing such symposia that will provide forums for the discussion of relevant issues involved by bringing together concerned and informed persons from wherever possible in order to share experiences.

The control of communicable diseases is one of the eight important program areas of the Primary Health Care approach identified at the Alma Ata Conference for the achievement of "Health for All by the Year 2000". The danger that communicable diseases pose in the developing countries like Ethiopia is indeed very high. Because of this, the control activities being carried out in this area in our country are numerous. It is generally agreed that among these, the leprosy and tuberculosis control programs deserve special attention due to the specific historical development of these programs, the social and economic importance of the two diseases and their chronic nature. It is in recognition of these and other factors that the NHDN-E Committee, at its December 1983 meeting, decided to organize a symposium on the theme of "The Control of Chronic Communicable Diseases and Primary Health Care : The Case of Leprosy and Tuberculosis" with the following main objectives:

1. to clarify the present status of control measures in leprosy and tuberculosis and how they relate to the PHC approach;
2. to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the control programs in leprosy and tuberculosis in Ethiopia ; and
3. to elaborate the issue of integration of these control programs within the general health service system.

Although the symposium focuses on these two important diseases, the anticipation is that the lessons learned from the discussions would strengthen the national effort to control other communicable diseases.

Of course, it is very important that we should discuss communicable diseases in general and these two diseases in particular here and now. The timing of this symposium has been facilitated by the annual meeting of the Medical Advisory Committee of ALERT that took place immediately before our programme and, therefore, brought together in Addis

Ababa the participating experts in the fields concerned, especially the expatriate members. In view of the importance of the programme, the regional managers of health services and the regional leprosy programme coordinators from the nine regions of the country where there are on-going programs as well as heads of the tuberculosis control program, hospital directors, department and division heads and experts with in the Ministry of Health headquarters are included to participate in the symposium and share their valuable experiences.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our most sincere thanks to these experts, both national and international groups, for accepting our invitation to participate in this important symposium by presenting papers. We are also very thankful to ALERT for its great contribution in facilitating the organizing of this programme. We are greatly indebted to Comrade Dr. Gizaw Tsehai, member of the C.C. of WPE, the Minister of Health, for finding time to be here to open the symposium and we take it to be a measure of his concern and determination for the control of communicable diseases in our country .

It is our sincere hope that all participants will take active part in the discussions and enjoy the day 's program.