

**For favour of publicity**

**6th August 2012**

**A statement circulated by Dr. S.D. Gokhale, President, International Leprosy Union and Shri Ram Naik, former Petroleum Minister in a joint press conference held in Mumbai on 6th August 2012**

***Formation of Human Rights Committee for Leprosy Affected Persons***

**Mumbai, Monday:** For protecting human rights of the Leprosy Affected Persons (LAPs) and also to give organized help to them, the International Leprosy Union (ILU) has decided to constitute a 'Human Rights Committee for LAPs'. Shri Ram Naik, former Petroleum Minister has kindly agreed to work as the President. Dr. S.D. Gokhale, President, ILU will share the responsibility of the Vice-President. This information was given by Dr. S.D. Gokhale in a joint press conference in Mumbai today, when Shri Ram Naik was also present.

Giving details of the decision, Dr.S.D.Gokhale said,"While helping LAPs to solve their problems, it has been observed that human rights of LAPs are violated at several places. In the last few months, ILU filed 151 cases with the Central as well as State Human Rights Commissions. Out of them, favourable decisions have been taken in respect of 93 cases, 40 cases are still pending. In short, we can get justice in nearly 75 to 80 percent cases. We have therefore decided to form a Committee to protect human rights of the LAPs. While Shri Ram Naik has accepted to head the Committee as the President, Padmashri Dr. P.K. Gopal, President of the National Forum of LAPs will be the Chairman. Shri Suresh Kaul from Rajasthan will be the Secretary. One person from each of the 19 states where leprosy has been detected will be the co-ordinators. Shri R.H.Belavadi, former Inspector General of Prisons will be the co-ordinator for Maharashtra along with Dr.C.S.Walter from Delhi, Dr. Rangnadhan Rao from Andhra Pradesh and Dr. Nuruddin from Tamilnadu. Efforts are being made to find suitable coordinators from the remaining states."

..2..

While explaining the reasons for taking the responsibility of the President, Shri Ram Naik said," For solving the problems of the LAPs, I had submitted a Petition to the Rajya Sabha in 2007 and has been following up for the solution with different authorities including the discussions with the former President Smt. Pratibha Patil on two occasions in the last one year. I have been also discussing the problems of the LAPs with Chief Ministers and Deputy Chief Ministers of Maharashtra for the last few years. While few problems are nearing solution, it appears that both the governments have been struck by leprosy, like LAPs, resulting into insensitiveness. As an antidote against their inaction, this Committee will take collective and individual grievances of the LAPs to the Human Rights Commission. I therefore thought of accepting the responsibility to organize this movement."

"Efforts will be made to finalize the state coordinators in the remaining states in the next three months. We appeal to all the LAPs to send their grievances of violation of human rights to the Human Rights Committee at Pune address", stated Shri Ram Naik and Dr.S.D. Gokhale at the end. Address: The International Leprosy Union - Health Alliance, Casp Bhavan, Survey No. 132/2, Plot N.3, Pashan - Baner Link Road, Pune 411 021, Tele/fax: 020-25862836, email: ilupune@gmail.com

**For (Office Secretary)**