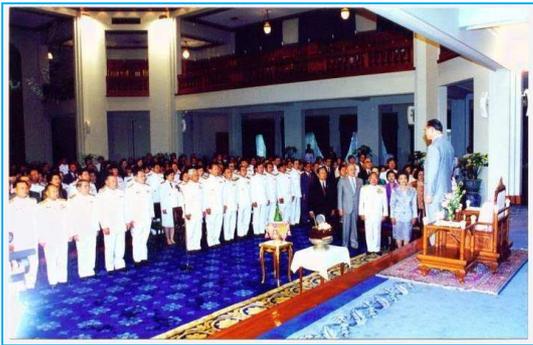




MOPH launches the leprosy campaign observing the 70th Anniversary Celebration of His Majesty the King's Accession to the Throne



On 11th January 2016 at the Ministry of Public Health; Prof. Dr. Piyasakol Sakolsatayadorn, the Public Health Minister together with Dr. Amnuay Gajeena, the Department of Disease Control (DDC) Director-General and Mr. Prakrit Kitwit who had received His Majesty the King's royal grace participated in the press conference on the leprosy campaign observing the 70th Anniversary Celebration of His Majesty the King's Accession to the Throne.



Prof. Dr. Piyasakol announced that the objective of this campaign is to respond to His Majesty the King's intention in sustaining leprosy elimination by accelerating new case detection. The goal is to reduce new cases to be less than 100 among which less than 20 cases have leprosy related disabilities by 2020.

In 1957; His Majesty the King adopted leprosy control program as the royal initiative project resulting in achievement of leprosy elimination milestone in 1994. The number of leprosy cases has declined gradually. However, as of 2014, there were 208 newly detected cases among which 31 cases had leprosy related disabilities due to delayed treatment. Moreover, it is expected that there are still a number of undetected cases living in general community. Apart from that, the increasing number of leprosy cases among migrant workers since 2011 has stoked concerns.



In the light of the official joining in the ASEAN Community this year, the Ministry of Public Health asked all sectors to corporately detect new cases to prevent disabilities and interrupt leprosy transmission in community. Dr. Amnuay Gajeena pointed out that the DDC has added 3 measures to strengthen leprosy elimination which are 1) Accelerating new case detection in areas with epidemiological indicator, 66 districts in 35 provinces. To stimulate this measure, Raj Pracha Samasai Foundation provides THB 2,000 to each new case detected during 16th January 2016 - 15th January 2017 for traveling expenses, and National Health Security Office supports THB 10,000 for Rapid Village Survey per one village and THB 100 for contact survey per one household, 2) Strengthening leprosy surveillance in migrant workers by health check-up before issuing work permits, training medical personnel of both public and private sectors, and producing 5 language-self-screening forms, and 3) Developing leprosy specialist service in 20 general hospitals covering 13

Regional Health areas all over the country. In addition, in order to reduce delayed in diagnosis and sharing leprosy related information, electronic social group has been formed to facilitate effective communication among different concerned professionals. He added that the early signs of leprosy are hypopigmented or reddish macule with dry and loss of sensation or reddish ring-shaped plaque, and reddish non-itchy papule or nodule. He then advised people to practice self and family member-examination and report to nearby health unit in case of finding mentioned symptoms. He emphasized that leprosy is curable. Transmission is interrupted shortly after taking anti-leprosy drugs. People affected by leprosy can live normally with their families.



Mr. Prakrit Kitwit mentioned his difficulties in facing leprosy related disabilities in the past. His Majesty the King's royal grace had inspired him to cope with the problems. He had developed himself until being able to feed his family and live with dignity as general people. What he asked from the society are opportunities and supports provided to people affected by leprosy.

Raj Pracha Samasai Institute
Department of Disease Control, MoPH
11th January 2016