

## **Update from Albania in the measures to implement the Cartagena Action Plan**

*Distinguished Chairman,*

*Excellencies,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

First, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to present Albania's progress of the mine VA activities and to reconfirm our commitment in fulfilling the objectives of the Cartagena Action Plan.

Albania has a well developed National Victim Assistance plan, which is in harmony with the recommendations of the Cartagena Action Plan. A National Victim Assistance workshop organized at the end of 2010, which gathered Government's representatives, local health authorities, donors and other actors and organizations involved in victim assistance, made an analysis and the progress and discussed the future needs for the victim Assistance.

It is worth emphasizing that people with disabilities, landmine and cluster munitions survivors and their representative organizations are an active part during formulation and implementation of Victim Assistance planning.

Data and detailed statistics on the casualties from mines and unexploded ordnances are available in Albania. The data are recorded in the IMSMA database and regularly shared with the relevant actors. A data collection project is active in 12 prefectures in Albania implemented by the Red Cross Society with financial support of the ICRC.

An inter-ministerial coordination mechanism is in place and actively led by the Chairman of AMAC. More positive developments are expected since Albania became a signatory to the CRPD in November 2009 and is now on the way to ratification. In addition the UNDP Project "Promoting Disability Rights in Albania, Support Programme on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)" which is being implemented jointly with the Albanian Government, has conducted recently a review of the disability-related legal and policy frameworks with the aim to assess their compliance with the CRPD.

In terms of the physical rehabilitation services are provided to the landmine survivors and other amputees; the prosthetic workshop in Kukës Regional Hospital has provided major repairs and new prostheses for at least 60 amputees. The workshop is facing though difficulties in securing enough raw materials and components in particular for the production of new prostheses. The regional hospital is covering all the running costs and also has provided some financial resources to this workshop equal to \$4,000, but this amount cannot cover all needs

therefore any financial assistance or donation on these materials and components would be welcomed.

Technical assistance is provided to the staff of the prosthetic workshop and the physiotherapy unit through a Physical and Medical Rehabilitation (PMR) project. This is greatly contributing to improve the capacities of the rehabilitation unit.

Social inclusion of child survivors has been on the focus of the victim assistance activities; 8 children/mine UXO survivors are currently being supported with educational activities with funds raised through the humanitarian event “Night of Thousand Dinners 2009”.

In the area of the economic empowerment, 20 survivors or their family members have successfully completed the vocational training courses and are assisted with some modest financial assistance to start up their small businesses.

Upon invitation of the President of the Tenth MSP a Symposium on enhancing cooperation and assistance in the pursuit of the victim assistance aims was organized in Tirana Albania from 30 May to 1 June 2011. Over 90 participants from at least 32 countries and several international and national organizations involved in victim assistance participated in the symposium.

The symposium provided a good chance to explore in greater depth some of the key matters concerning the victim assistance portion of the cooperation and assistance agenda. In more details about this you will be informed on 24 June during the Cooperation and Assistance session.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Despite the progress and the achievements to date, Albania still faces funding challenges in addressing the needs and rights of the landmine survivors and other persons with disabilities. Let me take this opportunity to call upon development partners to join our efforts so we can further improve the lives of the people who are suffering the horrible consequences of landmines and of other persons with disabilities.

Last, I would like to express again our gratitude to our partners, such as: UNDP, International Trust Fund Slovenia, Special Fund for Disabled, Handicap International, Regional hospitals, Albanian Red Cross and “ALB-AID Association”, which are an essential part of our programme and thank our loyal donors the US State Department, European Commission, DfID, the Government of France, ICRC and the Albania private sector, for their generous support which contributes to make a difference in people’s lives.

I thank you for your attention.