

Statement by Albania
on the status of implementation of victim assistance in
the context of
the MBT and the *Nairobi Action Plan*

STATEMENT
BY

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Mr. President

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me firstly to express my pleasure to address this meeting on behalf of Albanian Mine Action Programme and to reconfirm strong will and commitment to continue the progress in Victim Assistance Component in Albania.

Since the Kosovo conflict in 1999, **238** people have been injured and **34** deceased as a result of the mines laid along Albania/Kosovo border. In addition to those, there are an estimated **500** ERW survivors at least, throughout Albania who were injured as a result of the ammunition depots looted throughout the country during the 1997 uprising.

In Albanian Mine Action Programme a broad integrated victim assistance strategy was adopted with the goal of building a sustainable Albanian capability for victim assistance. These goals are in line with the goals set forth in the Nairobi Action plan and the Albanian Government is committed in working towards their fulfillment with the much appreciated support from the international community.

The main objectives are:

- Fitment of prostheses to lower limb amputees and rehabilitation of sight impaired in Albania and upper limb amputees and difficult cases abroad.
- Building the capacity of Albanian institutions to fit all types of prostheses and orthoses in Albania by the end of 2009.
- Economic reintegration of mine victims through vocational training and a micro-financing scheme for establishing home-based economies.
- Building a capacity in Northeast Albania to surgically treat trauma and amputee victims and serve as a level three medical facility for victims of demining accidents.
- Building a capacity in Northeast Albania to improve mine victims' access to, and quality of, medical, social, and rehabilitative services.

At the State Parties meeting in Jordan in **November 2007**, a short comprehensive presentation on the victim assistance programme in Albania was provided. Now, I would like to provide an update on the progress and work done in victim assistance in Albania since then towards achieving the goals set forth in the Nairobi Action Plan;

- In **February 2008** the third year of the project “*Economic reintegration of mine victims in Northeast Albania through development of household economies*” is funded by US DoS through ITF. The project will assist 20-25 mine/UXO survivors in establishing their home based economies.
- ICRC-SFD continued their support to National Prosthetic & Orthotic Center, through the provision of technical assistance and raw materials.
- The project “*Access to Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation [PMR] in Albania*” has been progressing well in all its components; **(1)** Training is ongoing for 6 prostheses/orthotic technicians. **(2)** It is established a programme for training the physiotherapists at the Faculty of Nursing in Tirana. Another 30 students are enrolled in the academic year 2008-2009. With funds from this project a physiotherapy cabinet is established at the Faculty of Nursing in Tirana in support of the training programme for the students. Phase II of this project; 2008-2010, is funded again from the US DoS.
- Regarding the developments in the **(3)** physical rehabilitation unit in Regional hospital, the Prostheses Workshop is fully operational within the Hospital structure. The center is upgraded in equipments and training. The prosthesis Workshop is assisting with repairs and new fittings with prostheses all people in need as per their needs. The developments of those capacities in the Region are considered very important in VA strategy of Albanian Mine Action Programme.
- UNDP/BCPR through the project “*Mine Action in Albania towards the fulfilment of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty obligations*”, funded by DfID, earmarked a budget of **50 000 USD** to procure raw materials and equipments for the prostheses Workshop in Kukes Regional Hospital. The procured materials for the Prosthesis Workshop will enhance the capacities and capabilities of the workshop to better and long term assist landmine/UXO Survivors and other people with disabilities in need for prosthetic and orthotic devices.
- UNDP/BCPR through the project “*Support for social-economic re-integration of Mine/ERW survivors*” funded by Swedish Government earmarked a budget of 200 000 USD for the Victim Assistance Component. The aim of this project is to assist 45 adults’ mine/ERW victims in vocational professional training and entrepreneurship training courses. In addition logistic support will be provided to 238 survivors for medical and social services as per survivors needs.
- ITF with funds from US DoS is in process to procure additional

surgical equipments for the regional hospital in mine affected areas. The surgical equipments are expected to arrive in Kukes Regional Hospital during July –August and this will improve the Emergency and ongoing Health Care capabilities in mine affected areas.

- The humanitarian event “*Night of Thousand dinners*” was hosted in **October 2007** and raised over **\$ 17 000** from the individual donors and private sector in Albania. This amount is matched by US DOS through ITF, which will be used to assist 10 children/mine UXO survivors in the socio-economic reintegration activities.

Mr. President,

In line with the plans and commitment for victim assistance portrayed in Zagreb in 2005 as well as the main objectives listed above, the specific plans to be taken in order to build this capacity in Albania include: reconstruction of the National Orthotic Prosthetic Centre (NOPC); provision of medical equipment and supplies for the NOPC and hospitals/health centres; training of medical specialists in provision of emergency and ongoing medical assistance; improved rehabilitation facilities and capacity in Kukes region; training prosthetic/orthotic technicians to international standards; provision of vocational training for mine survivors; establishment of a sustainable revolving loan fund; and advocacy raising for the rights of People with Disabilities.

I would like to express my gratitude to all implementing partners of our programme such as; UNDP, ICRC-SFD, UNICEF, ITF, Slovenian Institute of Rehabilitation, National Orthotic Prosthetic Center, Handicap International, the local NGO “Victims of Mine & Arms” VMA-Kukes Association”, Regional Districts hospitals, and the Institute of Primary Health Care.

Gratitude and thanks to the donors of our programme including the US State Department, the International Trust Fund, UNDP, DfiD, the Government of France, ICRC, EC and the Albania private sector (N1KD),

Lastly, I would like to reaffirm once again the commitment of the Albania to ensuring the well-being of the Albanian citizens injured by mines and UXO and our work forward in order to achieve the goals set forth.

Thank you for your attention.