

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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24- 29 May 2009, Geneva

Dear Co-Chairs

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me firstly to express my pleasure to address this meeting and to reconfirm the will and commitment to continue the progress in Victim Assistance in Albania.

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.

I will provide a brief summery on the **progress** in Albania in applying the conclusions on victim assistance adopted at the First Review Conference,

- The surgical capacities are improved at mine affected region; General and trauma surgical equipments are provided to the hospitals and the surgical units are rehabilitated. Short term refresher trainings are provided to the surgeons working at those hospitals.
- In improving the emergency and ongoing health care in Northeast Albania, a CBR network comprised of 30 nurses and medical specialists is established. Refresher training and Medical kits much need are provided.
- A new Protheses Workshop is established from 2005 at Kukës Hospital conducting repairs and in late 2007 and on is upgraded to and producing new protheses for lower limbs.
- The rehabilitation unit at Kukes hospital is fully operational, equipments and adequate training is provided; three more staff have been added and included in the hospital structure.
- There is a progress in building the *Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation* capacities at national level; two technicians at NPOC successfully completed training abroad as ISPO Level II category. Training is ongoing in Albania for 6 other protheses/orthotic technicians. It is established a programme for training the physiotherapists at the Faculty of Nursing in Tirana. 90 students are enrolled in the academic years 2006-2009. Upgrade training for 20 medical doctors on the Physical Medicine is currently ongoing.
- 84 mine victims and their families have been assisted in establishing home based economies in animal husbandry.
- 75 mine/UXO survivors or their family members completed vocational training courses, while 20 more are currently at training and expected to finish in August 2009.

In regards to the **challenges**, I briefly would list the following;

- Migration of the capacities from the mine affected region to more urban areas has resulted in short of the services in some hospitals in the mine affected areas.
- Other competing priorities within the health sector have resulted in less attention to the needs of the survivors in terms of the medical and physical rehabilitation needs. This particularly has delayed the proper location of the NPOC.
- High unemployment rate in mine affected region have burden the possibilities for mine survivors and disabled persons in general to employment opportunities. Even when assisted with the vocational training initiatives, the survivors have difficulties in competing with same other professions and services offered.
- Poverty and lack of the economic developments in mine affected region, has brought another difficulty for mine survivors to get jobs and develop economic reintegration activities.

In terms of **actions to overcome those challenges** shortly I will mention;

- Government is reinforcing the state rules and regulation to ensure that medical staff is available at all levels. Whenever difficulties persist, incentives are applied to trauma surgeons, intensive care and primary health care specialists, to ensure the availability of the services.
- Meetings with high officials at Ministry of Health have been organized, in order to have a proper location and improve the management capacities at the National Prosthetic & Orthotic Center.
- Family members of survivors are encouraged to participate in socio-economic reintegration projects whenever possible,
- Government is providing full social and health insurance coverage to the private companies, when those companies employ the Persons with Disabilities.
- Awareness raising workshops and activities has been organized from Disabled Peoples Organizations, thus drawing attention of the policy and decision makers towards disability issues.
- And, lately Kukes Region is being more in focus from the Government and development agencies. This has and is greatly contributed to a large extend of the developments in the area and to an increase on the economic possibilities. Mine action has been included in Kukes Regional Development Initiative; therefore specific projects have been and will be implemented in the mine affected villages.

Dear Co-Chairs,

Please allow me to express my gratitude to all our implementing partners such as; UNDP, ICRC/SFD, UNICEF, ITF, Slovenian Institute for Rehabilitation, National Prosthetic & Orthotic 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 many thanks to the donors of our programme including the United States, the European Commission, United Kingdom , France, Austria, Sweden and ICRC, UNDP, the International Trust Fund Slovenia and the Albanian private sector (NIKD),

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.