

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

Mr. President

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me first to express my pleasure to address to the Tenth Meeting of States Parties and to reconfirm the commitment to continue the efforts towards fulfilling the objectives of the Cartagena Action Plan.

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 at least **680** survivors from abandoned unexploded ordnances (AXO), throughout Albania who were injured as a result of the ammunition depots looted throughout the country during the 1997 uprising.

Let me provide an update on the actions from Albania to implement the Cartagena Action Plan;

- *As part of Promoting Inclusion Week, a series of activities were carried out in various regions in Albania. These activities included: panel debates, addresses from the disabled people, positive experiences and the most important the challenges they face in their daily life. The activities organized by Albanian Disability Rights Foundation and supported by the British Council were a very good opportunity for the people with disabilities and their organizations to voice their problems and the challenges in the presence of the high level government representatives and the donor community.*
- *At the activity "EU Mine Action visibility Day", a representative of mine survivor addresses the participants and made an appeal for continued support and attention towards the problems the survivors and other people with disabilities face in their daily life. The participants at the event included the Mine Action donors in Albania, the representatives of line ministries, international organizations, the national NGOs involved in victim Assistance/disability issues and a group of landmine survivors.*
- *Albania launched the monitoring report on "The Implementation of the National Action Plan of the National Strategy on the people with Disabilities". The strategy is a legal document approved by the Council of the Ministers, which defines the objectives to be achieved in the period 2005-2014 and the respective responsibilities of the Albanian central and local government to carry out specific tasks to attain those objectives. The evaluation report is launched on yearly basis and findings, results, problems, challenges, provided in this report will guide state institutions and all other actors involved in the disability issues in Albania.*

- Also the evaluation report on the project "Access to Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation" by Handicap International and in close cooperation with Ministry of Health, Faculty of Nursing in Tirana and the AMAE outlined the needs, challenges and the future recommendations provided in this document will guide the relevant actors on the work and planning in this particular area in the future.
- Albania recently established for all health professionals the "National Center of Continuing Education (NCCE)" a governmental public institution that functions as a technical agency of the Ministry of Health. The units of the center work together to plan, coordinate, monitor and evaluate continuing education activities of health professionals.
- The third phase of the project "Access to Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Services" will further reinforce rehabilitation capacities in Albania through various actions.
- The installation of the equipments of new Emergency department at Mother Teresa University Hospital has been completed. Part of this hospital also will be the establishment of the "Second National Trauma Center" in the capital Tirana.
- The prosthetic workshop in Kukes Hospital provided major repairs and new prostheses for 110 amputees. In addition, 20 mine/UXO survivors classified as difficult cases are fitted with new prostheses at the University Rehabilitation Institute.
- Additional funds to provide surgical equipments and raw materials for the Prosthetic workshop are pledged by ITF/US State Department. This will improve the Emergency and ongoing Health Care capabilities. In addition, refresher training for the medical personnel will be provided.
- A Vocational Training project, aiming to assist 20 survivors with professional skills is at its final phase and further the survivors will be assisted with free loans and technical expertise, to establish their small businesses.
- 8 children/mine UXO survivors are being supported with educational activities, through the humanitarian event "Night of Thousand Dinners 2009".
- From 3-4 November 2010, Albania organized a National Victim Assistance workshop, which gathered the representatives from different line ministries; Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Ministry of Defense, regional health authorities and other local authorities, donors of the Albanian Mine Action Programme, organisations and other actors involved in victim assistance; The national workshop aimed to analyze the

*progress done in the area of Victim Assistance and most important to develop a four year plan for the victim Assistance on the components: data collection, emergency and continuing medical care, physical rehabilitation, psychological and psycho-social support and socio-economic reintegration. Most important, besides other disabled people, landmine and cluster munitions survivors were an active part in the discussions and their priorities are strongly considered to the future Victim Assistance plans.*

*Some of the priorities listed from this workshop include;*

- Continue providing the support and strengthen the existing capacities at rehabilitation unit at Kukes Hospital.*
- Improve management, capacities and the services provided by the National Prosthetic Center in Tirana. Proper location of this center was considered an urgent issue to be addressed.*
- Depth analysis of the medical and socio- economic reintegration needs of 680 survivors from the abandoned unexploded ordnances (AXO) allover Albania.*
- Using the experience gained in northern part of the country, expand the assistance activities to the areas with the considerable number of survivors from the abandoned unexploded ordnances (AXO).*

And, finally I would like to express our gratitude to all our implementing partners in the area of Victim Assistance such as: UNDP, ITF, Special Fund for Disabled, University Rehabilitation Institute, Handicap International, Regional hospitals, and "ALB-AID Association".

In addition, let me convey our special thanks to the donors; the US State Department, European Commission, DfiD, the Government of France, ICRC and the Albania private sector.

Again, we reaffirm our commitment to further advance the support and the care provided to mine survivors and other people with disabilities in Albania in the implementation of the Cartagena Action Plan.

Thank you for your attention.