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**Update from Albania at the Twelfth Meeting of States Parties to Anti-
Personnel Mine Ban Convention**

Geneva

3-7 December 2012

(Check against delivery)

Mr. President,

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to be here today and to speak on the work in Victim Assistance in Albania.

Right at the beginning, we would like to share with all of you the great news that the Albanian Parliament ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) on 15 November 2012. All the Members of the Parliament present in the Plenary Session voted unanimously for the ratification of the CPRD, which shows the awareness of Albanian legislators on human rights of persons with disabilities.

Persons with disabilities including mine and unexploded ordnance survivors are at hope and strongly believe that the ratification of the CRPD will strongly contribute at improving the situation of men and women, boys and girls with disabilities in Albania.

Albania possesses complete data and detailed statistics, disaggregated by age and sex, on the casualties from mines, cluster munitions and the so called hotspots. This data are collected at national scale from the volunteers of the Red Cross Society in Albania with the kind support of the ICRC.

Albania already harmonized its victim assistance capacities and programs with existing national policies and capacities for people with disabilities. Through this process, we have continuously involved all victim assistance stakeholders from all levels, including mine survivors and other PWD or their representative organizations.

In September 2012, the Albanian Ministry of Health in close cooperation with the University Rehabilitation Institute Slovenia organized a 4 days theoretical and practical training workshop on "*Rehabilitation of people following amputation and provision with rehabilitation aids*". Target groups for this training were 13 participants; surgeons, orthopedists, nurses, physiotherapists and prosthetic/orthotic technicians from several hospital departments in Albania. Funding from this training is made possible from the Slovenian Government.

The Ministry of Health continues to work in close cooperation with partners in improving the emergency, ongoing health care and the rehabilitation capacities. Those services are equally available to men, women, boys and girls in all former mine and cluster munitions affected areas.

Physical rehabilitation services are available and are provided to the mine/UXO survivors and other amputees. The prosthetic workshop in Kukes Regional Hospital has provided repairs and new prostheses for at least 65 amputees. Alongside the funding provided by the government for the local purchased materials for this prosthetic workshop, there are gaps and shortages. Albania is closely working with partners and donors to secure this much needed assistance for all amputees.

In the area of the economic and social inclusion, from the mid 2012 with the kind support of the mobile phone company VODAFONE, 20 survivors and persons with disabilities from the former mine/cluster munitions region are being supported with vocational training courses. This project will be completed in 2013.

Excellencies,

Dear colleagues,

Besides the progress and achievements, we are still facing difficulties in addressing the needs and rights of the survivors and other persons with disabilities. I would like appeal again to partners to help us in our efforts.

The Cartagena Action Plan will guide us in our future work and will do utmost to improve the services and meet the needs of the victims and survivors and other people with disabilities.

At the end, I would like to thank our donors and partners; the US Department of State, European Commission, DfiD, the Governments of; Germany, Austria, France, Slovenia, and the ICRC, ITF Enhancing Human Security, UNDP and the Albania private sector, for their generous support.

Thank you for your attention!