

EIGHTH MEETING OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE USE, STOCKPILING, PRODUCTION AND TRANSFER OF ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION

Jordan, 17-22 November 2007

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

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*Mr. President
Excellencies
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,*

Allow me firstly to express my pleasure to address this meeting on behalf of the Government of Albania and to reconfirm the Government's strong will and commitment to continue the progress in Victim Assistance in Albania.

Since the Kosovo conflict started in 1999, **238** people have been injured and **34** deceased as a result of the mines laid along the Albanian/Kosovo border. In addition to those injured from the mines laid during the Kosovo conflict, there are an estimated **485** mine/UXO survivors at least, throughout Albania who were injured as a result of the ammunition depots looted throughout the country during the 1997 uprising.

A broad integrated victim assistance strategy was adopted in 2002 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 intersessional meeting in April 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;

- With funds from the Government of France, UNDP procured basic medical equipments/supplies for the 30 nurses of the CBR network. The equipments are delivered in June 2007 to the nurses working in mine-affected villages followed by a training how to use the equipments. This medical equipment will improve emergency and ongoing medical care for mine survivors as well as other inhabitants of the mine affected areas.
- With fund provided by EC through UNDP, a set of surgical equipments are provided to the hospital in Tropoja. This set includes; the surgical bed, central lamp, electrosurgical unit, at least three surgical emergency kits, two full sets of the surgical instruments for the trauma , monitor for the intensive care room and hot air sterilizer. The training followed ones the equipments were delivered.
- The project “Access to Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PMR- phase I) in Albania” has been progressing well in all its components; (1)Training is ongoing for 6 prostheses/orthotic technicians from Kukes, Pogradec and Tirana, (2)It is established a programme for training physiotherapists at the Faculty of Nursing in Tirana.
- Regarding the developments in the (3) physical rehabilitation unit in Kukes, the Prostheses Workshop is fully operational within the Hospital structure. The center is upgraded in equipments and training under the HI PMR-phase I project. Kukes Regional Hospital has provided additional space within the main building of the hospital and Ministry of Health provided \$ 35 000 usd needed to enlarge this workshop. The reconstruction is almost at the end process and then Prostheses Workshop and physiotherapy will move to this new unit soon. With the technical assistance provided under PMR –phase I project the aim is to produce prostheses for lower limbs in Kukes and further improve the capacities. Kukes hospital has provided two additional new staff at this unit. The development of those capacities at Kukes region are considered very important at VA workshop organized in April in Albania.
- The VA Workshop named: “*Achievements, needs and future plans on Victim Assistance in Albania*” brought together more than 40 actors involved in providing the services to assist mine survivors. Participants from Ministry of Health and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Health and Rehabilitation providers at national and district level, donors and mine survivors, reviewed in two days the existing action plan for mine victim assistance, in conformity to the aims of the Nairobi Action Plan. The workshop was very good opportunity in reviewing all the objectives in the action plan and we are working closely with all above mentioned actors to guarantee that activities are fully integrated into long- term public health and social services plans. The workshop was followed by a two days field visit of Mr. Markus Reiterer, Austrian Co-Chair of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-economic Reintegration, Ms. Sheree Bailey- Victim Assistance Expert, Implementation Support Unit-GICHD.
- With funds made available from the EC, raw materials/equipments and supplies are provided to the National Prosthetic/orthotic Center in Tirana and share of these materials are sent to Prostheses Workshop in Kukes.

- The Prosthetic-orthotic technician supported from ICRC-SFD in 3 years training in India, is back now at the NOPC and thus will contribute to improve the capacities of the NOPC. He is trained and certified as Level I- ISPO. In addition ICRC-SFD has provide monitoring visits at the NOPC during 2007.
- UNDP with EC funds has completed the implementation of the vocational training project with VMA and provided 20 mine survivors with vocational trainings in jobs such as small electronic repairs, hairdressing, computers, etc. As of today 16 of these survivors has opened their small shops/repair facilities. This is bringing a change in their attitude regarding what they are capable of achieving.
- The humanitarian event “ Night of Thousand dinners” was hosted by the US Embassy in October 2007 and raised over \$ 17 000 from the individual donors and private sector in Albania, which will be used for victim assistance in Albania.

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 Orthopedic Prosthetic Centre (NOPC); provision of medical equipment and supplies for the NOPC and hospitals/health centres in Kukes region; training of medical specialists from Kukes region 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 Prosthetic/Orthotic Center, Handicap International, the local NGO “Victims of Mine & Arms- Kukes Association”, Kukes Regional Districts hospitals, and the Institute of Primary Health Care.

I would also like to thank the donors of our programme including the US State Department, the International Trust Fund, UNDP, DfiD, the Albania private sector (N1KD), the Governments of Austria and France, ICRC-SFD, and the EC

Lastly, I would like to reaffirm once again the commitment of the Albanian Government 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 very much for your attention.