



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

PROGRESS IN MEETING THE MBT ASSISTING THE VICTIMS
STATEMENT BY THE MEMBER OF ALBANIAN DELEGATION

9-th Meeting of the State Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban
Convention

Geneva, 27 November 2008

Mr. President,

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

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

Since the Kosova 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.

The Albanian Mine Action Programme has adopted a broad integrated victim assistance strategy with the goal of building a sustainable Albanian capability for victim assistance. This goal is in line with the goals set forth in the ***Nairobi Action Plan*** and the Albanian Government is committed towards its 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.

I would like to provide an update on the progress in victim assistance in Albania since the Standing Committees meeting in *June 2008* towards achieving the goals set forth in the Nairobi Action Plan;

- Through the project "*Economic reintegration of mine victims in Northeast Albania through development of household economies-Third Year*", **21** mine/UXO survivors are assisted in establishing their home based economies. This makes a total of **84** mine/UXO survivors assisted so far. The project is funded by US DoS through ITF.
- The project "Support for social-economic re-integration of Mine/ERW survivors" funded by the Swedish Government through UNDP provides assistance to **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.
- The funding raised by the humanitarian event "Night of Thousand Dinners - 2007" is being used to assist **10** children mine UXO survivors in socio-economic reintegration activities.
- ICRC-SFD continued their support to the 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: Training is ongoing for 6 prostheses/orthotic technicians and last week the training courses on lower limbs were successfully completed and the certificates are recognized by the Ministry of Education. A programme for training the physiotherapists is established at the Faculty of Nursing in Tirana. A physiotherapy cabinet is established at the Faculty of Nursing in Tirana in support of the training programme for the students.
- The Prostheses Workshop established at Kukes Regional Hospital, which covers the mine affected areas, is fully operational and upgraded in equipments, staff and training. The prosthesis Workshop is assisting with repairs and new fittings with prostheses for all people in need. During 2008 only, more than 60

amputees were assisted with major repairs at this Prostheses Workshop and at least 12 amputees were fitted with new prostheses.

- Through the support of the PMR project, 3 Health Care Professionals participated at the Fifth Mediterranean Congress on Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation in Portoroz in September 2008
- Raw materials and equipments for the Prostheses Workshop in Kukes Regional Hospital worth **50,000 USD** were procured with funding from DfID through the UNDP. The procured materials for the Prosthesis Workshop were delivered to Kukes Hospital in July 2008.
- Surgical equipments procured with US DoS funding through the ITF are expected to arrive in Kukes Regional Hospital within 2008 and will improve the emergency and ongoing Health Care capabilities in the mine affected areas. The development of these capacities in the Region is considered very important for the Albanian Mine Action Programme.

Mr. President,

In line with the plans and commitment for Victim Assistance portrayed in Zagreb in 2005 our main objectives on building the **VA** capacities in Albania include: reconstruction of the National Prosthetic Orthotic Centre (**NPOC**); provision of medical equipment and supplies for the NPOC and hospitals/health centers; 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.

On behalf of the Albanian Government, I would like to express again my gratitude to all our partners such as: UNDP, ICRC-SFD, UNICEF, ITF, Slovenian Institute of Rehabilitation, the National Orthotic Prosthetic Center, Handicap International, the local NGO “Victims of Mine & Arms” VMA-Kukes Association” and Regional District hospitals.

Gratitude and thanks to the donors of our victim assistance projects including the US State Department, UNDP, DfID, the Government of France, Sweden, EC and the Albania private sector (N1KD),

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

Thank you for your attention.