Distinguished Co Chair
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,
Allow me firstly to thank you for the opportunity to address this meeting on behalf of Albanian Mine and Munitions Programme in Albania.

Albania has adopted a broad integrated victim assistance strategy with the goal of building a sustainable Albanian capability for victim assistance and the wider disability sector.
The victim assistance Programme in Albania, comprised of several components: Data collection and analysis; emergency and ongoing medical care; physical rehabilitation and provision of prosthesis; psychosocial assistance and socio-economic inclusion; and awareness raising for the rights of mines, cluster munitions and abandoned unexploded ordnances survivors and other people with disabilities.

In particular at this presentation, I will be focused in the collaboration between the Government of Albania with donors and the non-governmental organizations in the development of the Medical and
Physical Rehabilitation capacities, thus creating and strengthening those capacities in order to address the needs of victims and the wider disabled persons with disabilities.

ICRC/SFD has supported the development of the prosthetic and Orthotic capacities at the National Prosthetic Orthotic center in Albania, through the technical assistance and raw materials and components provided to the center. Additionally, a Prosthetic Technologist, fully trained as ISPO level II category through the ICRC sponsorship programme, returned to Albania, thus contributing to the technical and management capacities at the National Prosthetic Center in Tirana.

Back in 2004 with the request of mines and cluster munitions survivors and other amputees, health and local authorities in Kukes mine/UXO affected region established a prosthetic support center in Kukes Hospital, initially foreseen to do just repairs of the prostheses. At that time the survivors and other amputees from that affected region, have to travel at least 7 hours even for a simple repairs of their prostheses.

In 2005 & 2006, with the financial support for the US Department of State through International Fund, Ministry of Health in Albania in close cooperation with the Mine Action Programme developed a 5-Year programme for the development of the Medical and Physical Rehabilitation (PMR) capacities at National and local level.
Right at the beginning/start of the project through an agreement, Ministry of Health and Handicap International tailored the roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the PMR project.

The PMR project consisted of several components and activities such as;

- The development and Implementation of the PMR national Action Plan of action
- The Nursing Faculty in Tirana implements a sustainable program for the development of the Physiotherapy Training.
- The first ever generation of 20 Physiotherapist graduated in June 2009 and other generations are enrolled yearly.
- The physiotherapy cabinet for training purposes created and fully equipped at Faculty of Nursing
- 7 Prosthetic technicians received full Theoretical and Practical on job training. The certificates received from this training - Recognized by Ministry of Education based on the agreement between MoH and MoE.
- The quality of the existing prosthetic services has improved and training capacities consolidated.
- The prosthetic facilities at regional level are improved and delivering services to all disabled people. Initially foreseen just for the repair of the prostheses, The Kukes prosthetic Workshop since 2007 is able and delivering new prostheses and all kinds of repairs.
• The physiotherapy unit in regional hospital equipped, upgraded and fully operational.

• 20 medical doctors received one year formal training in PMR.

**SLIDE- 4**

At all activities mentioned above there was of close cooperation and the coordination of the activities.

The government contribution was significant and on time;

- The government provided all educational expenses and facilities for the students.

- The number of Teachers at the Faculty of Nursing increased as needed. All included in the structure of the Faculty of Nursing.

- Prosthetic Workshop and Physiotherapy unit in Kukes hospital, relocated in the main building of the hospital, given the space needed for the production of new prostheses and other rehabilitations needs. All renovated to a very good standard.

- Number of staff at of the rehabilitation unit in Kukes was increased from 2 at start of the project, at 5 in total today, and all in the permanent structure of the hospital.

The donor and NGO contribution consisted in;

- The technical expertise not available in Albania.

- Development of the curricula's for the Physiotherapy school at the Faculty of Nursing in Tirana.
- Exchange visits and experience with the Belgium Physiotherapy School
- Clinical placement and clinical seminars
- The development of the training materials for the prosthetic technicians.
- Prosthetic and Orthotic Engineers (ISPO level 1) responsible to provide the training to 7 Albanian Technicians

An added value to the project has been the continuous support from donor at the three phases of the project. This has secured the continuation of the teaching and training activities of the project.

**SLIDE 5**

Another good area of cooperation between government and the NGOs, implementing projects in the area of socio-economic inclusion for survivors and their family members.

With support from European Commission & Swedish Government through UNDP and the support of US Department of State through ITF several projects providing the vocational professional training to survivors and their family members are organized.

- NGOs have used the agreement between the governments of Albania and Kosova to provide FREE vocational training courses to survivors at the Vocational Training Centres in Kosova. This has increased the number of survivors benefiting form the vocational training courses.
- Also it continue to be a close cooperation between Local Employment and Social Service Office and the NGO, in jointly and through a transparent and points based system selecting the survivors and their family members to participate at the training courses.

- To date; 94 mine survivors have benefited from this support and collaboration, and another 15 are attending the vocational training courses- expected to successfully complete it by July 2012.

- And the Certificates received upon successful completion of the training are officially recognized by government authorities

**SLIDE- 6**

In terms of the challenges shortly I would mention;

- Migration of the capacities from the rural areas to more urban areas has resulted in short of the services in some regional hospitals and in Primary Health Care.

- Other competing and urgent priorities within the health sector have resulted in not due attention to the needs of the survivors in terms of the medical and physical rehabilitation. This particularly has delayed the proper location and the management of the NPOC.

- High unemployment rate in former mine affected region have burden the possibilities for survivors and disabled persons in general to employment opportunities. Even though 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 the former mine affected region, has brought another difficulty for mine survivors to get jobs and develop economic reintegration activities.

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THANK YOU