

**Update from Albania at the Third Meeting of States Parties to
Convention on Cluster Munitions**

Oslo 11-14 September 2012

Mr. President,

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

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

Albania aligned and harmonized its victim assistance capacities and programs with the other national policies for people with disabilities and in developing this, have continuously involved all victim assistance stakeholders, including the survivors, PWD or their representative organizations.

The Ministry of Health continues to work in close cooperation with donors and other 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.

Last week, 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.

Physical rehabilitation services are available and are provided to the cluster munitions survivors and other amputees. The prosthetic workshop in Kukes Regional Hospital has provided repairs and new prostheses for at least 40 amputees. Alongside the funding provided by the government for the local purchased materials for this prosthetic workshop, there are gaps and shortages already identified. Therefore, any form of assistance or donation on these raw materials and components

would be highly appreciated. Albania is closely working with partners and donors to secure this much needed assistance.

An important objective in our program as outlined in the national plan for victim assistance is “Addressing the medical and socio-economic needs of persons injured by Abandoned Unexploded Ordnance”, but we are facing some difficulties to fulfill this objective.

In the area of the economic and social inclusion, in June 2012 with the kind support of the mobile phone company VODAFONE, there will be 20 survivors and other persons with disabilities from the former mine/cluster munitions region who will attend vocational training courses. This project is expected to be completed in 2013.

Albania have almost complete data and detailed statistics, disaggregated by age and sex, on the casualties from mines/cluster munitions and hotspots. This data are collected from the volunteers of the Red Cross Society in Albania with the financial support of the ICRC.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is a progress and achievements to date, but Albania still faces challenges in addressing the needs and rights of the survivors and other persons with disabilities. I would like to call on our development partners to help us in our efforts so we can further improve the lives of the people who continue suffering the consequences of these horrible weapons.

The Vientiane 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.

Allow me at the end of my statement, to have the pleasure of expressing once again my gratitude to our partners, such as: UNDP, ITF, GICHD, Handicap International, ALB-AID and ARC which have proved to be such an essential part of our program.

Also, I would like to thank our loyal donors; the US State Department, European Commission, Germany, DfID, the Government of France, Austria, ICRC, and the Albania private sector, for their generous support.

I thank you for your attention!