

Excellences,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ensuring a cross-disability focus, social inclusion and integration of persons are prerequisites so that no one is left behind in Albania. Social reintegration of mine victim assistance in the broader disability framework and policies remains a challenge. Our duty remains to create preconditions for effective participation for all, including landmine survivors.

Policies for people with disabilities for 2021-2025, aim at combining the implementation of legislation, the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Challenge remains to improve legislation and enhance implementation in accordance with the needs of persons with disabilities.

National Action Plan for Persons with Disability 2021-2025, currently under implementation in Albania, includes policy goals aiming to improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities by providing accessible, affordable and client-centered services/benefits, integrated social services and community-based social services. The plan also addressed accessible and affordable healthcare for all categories of persons with disabilities and rehabilitation services for children and adults with disabilities.

Disability assessment reform in the social protection system and relevant action plan 2019-2024, currently under implementation, has implemented the bio-psycho-social model.

Removing the physical barriers for persons with disability remains a priority for existing and new buildings, to abide by principles of CRPD and national legislation. Law Nr. 93/2014 “On Inclusion and accessibility of Persons with Disabilities” has brought a framework for accessibility and definitions. Implementation of standards of accessibility must improve to enhance participation in society of persons with disabilities.

There have been significant steps to improve disability assessment and collect disaggregated data for disability which must extend to the victim assistance. The mine victims’ access to services remains a challenge in remote areas. Better social and health serviced in the community, must be accompanied with increased awareness.

Employment and vocational training programs, including those for the COVID-19 situation, targeted the needs of unemployed jobseekers, especially the most vulnerable.

With regard to participation in society, political and public life, accessibility is a prerequisite along with awareness to combat stigma and discrimination. This will lead to better implementation of components of victim assistance, taking into consideration also the principles of CRPD which are reflected in the Albanian legal framework.

Persons with disabilities, including landmine survivors have been disproportionately affected by Covid Pandemic. Access to support services has continued with commitment from medical and social staff, despite the COVID 19 situation for people with disabilities.

Comprehensive responses and initiatives on Victim Assistance need strengthened partnerships from all actors, with a focus on social inclusion, social and health services and rehabilitation, All the actors and taskholders engaged in disability inclusion should be aware of the needs of landmine survivors.

Thank you.