



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

**STATEMENT BY THE ALBANIAN DELEGATION,
TO THE COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD,
AT THE CONSIDERATION OF THE INITIAL REPORT OF
ALBANIA
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CRC**

**PRESENTED BY THE HEAD OF THE DELEGATION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA,
MR. LUAN HAJDARAGA,
DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Geneva, 12 January 2005

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished members of the Committee, UN
representatives, NGOs,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all we would like to express our profound sadness and affliction for the tens of thousands of children, victims of the tsunami that hit Southern Asia, and those who have been affected by this disaster. In these difficult moments, apart of avoiding the outbreak of diseases among the affected population, especially children, it is very important for the international community to undertake coordinated efforts for easing the traumas of losing human lives.

It is an honour for me to address at its 38th session, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Albania. As laid down in the report, the Republic of Albania considers the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as one of the most important international documents covering rights and obligations in all

the aspects of the child's life and it is fully committed to its implementation.

Mr. Chairman,

The initial report of the Republic of Albania and the written replies of the Albanian Government in response to the List of Issues, cover the reporting period 1992 until today. From 1992, the Albanian Government has been fully committed in thoroughly implementing the Convention. Numerous legal acts and amendments of the existing ones have been adopted in order to improve and further develop the living conditions and the legal position of children in the Republic of Albania.

During the reporting period were adopted and subsequently amended in order to cope with the new situations, the Criminal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Family Code and the law "On Civil Status". In addition has been drafted the law "On some amendments of the Criminal Procedural Code", some provisions of which deal with the protection of the rights of the child.

Mr. Chairman,

The international law was deserved a very important role in our country. Pursuant to article 122 of the Constitution, any ratified international agreement constitutes a part of the internal juridical system after it is published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Albania. It is directly applicable, except when it is self-applicable, and for its implementation the promulgation of a law is required. A legally ratified international agreement overrides the national laws not compatible with it.

The Republic of Albania has ratified the most important international instruments for the protection of children, such as those in the area of organised crime, labour, cyber crime etc. The Government has initiated the process of ratification of the CRC Optional Protocols "On the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography" and "On the involvement of children in armed conflicts". On 9 October 2003, the Republic of Albania adhered to the Convention on Contact concerning Children of the Council of Europe.

In compliance with the Stockholm Agenda of Action are foreseen interregional actions, on which bases has been drafted a draft-agreement between Albania and Greece "On the protection of unaccompanied children, trafficked or in risk of trafficking".

Mr. Chairman,

Better protection of children, survival, development and child participation have been always on the agenda of the Albanian government. In 2001, the Government adopted the National Strategy for Children, in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The strategy is based on the key principles of the Convention on the rights of the child, such as **survival, protection, development and participation.**

In 2004, the Council of Ministers established a new structure for the protection of the rights of the child, the Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Rights of the Child. The Committee is a structure representing a very high political

level headed by the Deputy Prime Minister and composed by the ministers dealing with the protection of the rights of the child. To facilitate the work of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Rights of the Child, has been established an inter-ministerial group of experts. The group of experts carries out all the necessary activities, which will lead to the establishment of a permanent structure for the rights of the child. The structure will be responsible also for the observance and coordination of activities for the overall implementation of the Convention.

Within the Ministry of Public Order has been established a special division for the protection of the rights of the children, whose head is today member of our delegation. The structure of the Division includes focal points in all the Police Departments in the Regions.

In the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has been established a special Unit for the Child Labour, while in some of the local government units (municipalities) are established Offices for the Rights of the Child. It is foreseen that such

offices be established in all the municipalities throughout the country.

In line with the strategy, the Ministry of Justice has initiated the project for the establishment of a special juvenile justice system.

Mr. Chairman,

The Albanian Government's view is that issues related to the human rights respect and protection cannot be tackled by government policies only, but by extensive consultation and involvement of a broader community. Therefore, as given in the report and the written replies, all the ministries have established a constructive cooperation with the respective NGOs that work on the protection of the rights of the child. Moreover, within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has been established a special division for relations with NGOs.

The outcome of the above-mentioned cooperation has brought to significant results in providing social services to

children, such as the establishment of new institutions of care for children in various parts of the country.

Getting back to our report we would like to mention with pleasure the establishment of a constructive cooperation between the Foreign Ministry and Albanian NGO-s dealing with human rights, particularly the rights of the child. One of the first outcomes of the commitment of the Albanian government and this fruitful cooperation consist in the report taken into consideration today by the Committee.

On the other hand, we believe that the input which NGOs bring to the domestic human rights debate is both constructive and an important source of positive dialogue in our common mission to protect and observe the rights of the child in Albania.

In addition, the Government cooperates also with the UNICEF and other UN specialised agencies, supporting their efforts in protection of the rights of the child. As provided in the report and the written replies, numerous common

projects have been implemented, while there are other ongoing.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are confident that the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child are of an essential importance and as such must be subject to continuous respect and observance. We also believe that the stronger protection of the rights of the child is closely related to a more mature democracy, and a more prosperous society, following the achievement of the MDG-s.

With regard to the prohibition of discrimination, I would like to put emphasis on the traditional values of the long non-discriminating history within the Albanian society. In practicing their rights, persons and children belonging to minorities enjoy full equality before the law. Minorities are not discriminated against and they exercise, individually or collectively without discrimination all the rights and freedoms enjoyed by other citizens.

The ratified international instruments, which constitute integral part of the domestic legislation, combined with domestic provisions on the matter, provide the necessary legal framework for guaranteeing to minorities protection and respect of their rights.

In addition, the Government attaches great importance to the education of minorities. Apart of adopting a modern legislation in compliance with the international standards, the Government has taken appropriate measures for the implementation of this right in practice, by organising training courses for children and qualification of teachers, summer schools, etc. It has to be mentioned also that the ratio pupils-teachers in the minority classes is 6 pupils for a teacher, whereas for other classes this ratio is 19 pupils for a teacher. Although the lack of rationality, due to the reduced number of pupils, the Ministry of Education and Science has put a lot of efforts in maintaining functional all the classes in schools attended by persons belonging to minorities.

Having in consideration particular necessities of the Roma minority, in September 2003 the Albanian Government

adopted the National Strategy for the Improvement of the Roma Living Conditions, establishing at the same time the "Monitoring Sector of the Strategy", to monitor its practical implementation.

The strategy focuses and is implemented in the area of education, arts and culture, media and participation in the civil life, employment, housing and social issues, public order, central and local administration, health, justice, and economy. Special tasks have been set for all the relevant ministries and structures in implementing the strategy.

With regard to the education of Roma children, it has to be mentioned that the state authorities are considering very seriously this issue. A clear indicator of these efforts is the adoption of the abovementioned strategy and the commitment of the Ministry of Education and Science in implementing the part of the strategy under its competence.

Within this framework, the Ministry of Education and Science is collecting the respective data on the present situation regarding the education of roma children, starting parallel

the implementation of a number of projects for launching the Roma language learning programme in some 8-year schools.

We are aware that due to the internal migrations, some citizens are not locally registered at their places of domicile. To resolve this problem, apart of adopting the Law on Civil Status, the Ministry of Local Government and Decentralisation is taking all the necessary measures to raise the awareness of the population on the issue, starting from the campaign of registration at the domicile, increasing the number of Civil Status Offices, broadcasting messages through radio and television etc.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Although Republic of Albania adopted the National Strategy for Children in 2001. Along with the Strategy, a detailed Plan of Action was adopted. However, the implementation of the Strategy required further revision, therefore until February 2005 the Plan of Action will be revised. The Plan of Action is a common program of the Albanian Government with the

UNICEF Office in Albania, in order to set some priorities with respect to the obligations of the entire society towards the protection and development of children.

In compliance with the UN proclaimed credo: "A world fit for children" and all its principles, the Government is fully committed in reviewing all the up to date achievements of the strategy, analyse all gaps, failures and situations, in order to better implement it.

In the process of reviewing the Action Plan, the Government intends to put together all the relevant domestic and international actors and institutions in the field of protection of the rights of the child.

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished members of the Committee,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have to highlight that even at the time of the submission of the report, and now we were and we are fully aware that there is much to improve with regard to the thorough

implementation of principles of protection, development and participation of children in the Republic of Albania.

Furthermore, the international law provides for the minimum standard of human rights protection and due to the complexity of today's reality in the world, and the vulnerability of children new threats and problems appear, which require new visions concerning their rights.

In light of the above, the Albanian Government is committed to welcome the suggestions and general recommendations as an outcome of the 38th Session of the Committee, which can provide us with very useful ground in the direction of furthering the standards of the rights of the child in our country.

Mr. Chairman,

After the above remarks, allow me to briefly introduce the members of the delegation that are ready for a constructive dialogue:

Dr. Luan Hajdaraga, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Head of the Delegation

Mr. Ervin Nina, human rights officer, Ministry of Foreign
Affairs

Mr. Luan Mullaj, Head of the Division for the Protection of
Children, Ministry of Public Order

Ms. Etleva Sheshi, expert for children, Ministry of Culture,
Youth and Sports

Ms. Nedime Ceka, Head of the Reproductive Health Division,
Ministry of Health

Ms. Valbona Gumi, interpreter

Allow me now Mr. Chairman to conclude my introductory
speech. The Republic of Albania strongly supports the
international principles that are embodied in the United
Nations documentation and the role of the Committee on the

Rights of the Child. I would like to thank you for the attention and I am calling you for a constructive dialogue.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.