

Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Consideration Report of Albania

Opening Statement of Ms. Ravesa Lleshi

Ambassador Permanent Mission of Albania

Geneva, 4-5 December 2018

Madame/ Mr. Chair,

Honourables members of Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to assure the distinguished experts for our best consideration for your work in promoting and protecting human rights. Your engagement as experts in this honorable Committee and the recommendations given under previous review, have given us the right direction in improving legal, institutional and policy framework for combating racial discrimination.

We consider the reporting process, the dialogue with the Committee and the Committee's recommendations as an effective tool to ensure compliance with international obligations, as well an opportunity to present the progress, difficulties and challenges situation in implementing the International the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD).

The Republic of Albania has acceded and ratified all the United Nations human rights conventions as well in the framework of the Council of Europe, including the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

Honourables members of Committee

The Republic of Albania has acceded to the Convention “On the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination” by Law no. 7768, dated 9.11.1993. The periodical national Report submitted by Albania in October 2017 contains information on the implementation of the provisions of the Convention and the Concluding Observations given by the Committee in September 2011.

During the reporting period, a series of measures are taken to improve the legal policy and institutional framework, in accordance with the obligations under the Convention, and the specific recommendations provided by CERD Committee.

The Constitution of the Republic of Albania and domestic legal framework stipulate indispensable fundamental rights and freedoms. The Albanian institutions are committed to improve and implement the legal, policy and institutional framework, to establishing and strengthening the institutional mechanisms to ensure the protection of human rights. In view of the human rights protection, a large number of independent institutions operate such as Constitutional Court, the courts of all levels, the General Prosecution, the Ombudsman, the Commissioner for the Protection against Discrimination, etc.

Albania is undertaking concrete steps to implement justice reform which have a direct impact in strengthening the rule of law, judiciary system, with the impact on human rights, consolidation of democracy.

Our country has been traditionally and constantly committed to continuously improve the standards on the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including national minority rights.

While inter-ethnic relations continued to be good, and a climate of respect and tolerance generally prevails, Albania significantly improved the legal and policy framework for the **protection of national minorities by adopting in 13 October 2017 a specific law on national minorities**, based on based on European standards, international expertise, through a comprehensive and transparent consultation process with different stakeholders, including national minority representatives.

The process of drafting this law was carried out in close consultation with minority associations and other relevant actors, through public hearings, with the help, assistance and advice of the best European expertise, including by the Council of Europe, based on european standarts and taking into account the specific conditions and needs of Albania.

The adoption and the implementation of this law constitute an important element of Albania's progress in reinforcing the protection of human rights, as one of the key priorities for the opening of accession negotiations with the European Union.

A broad consultation process during different stages of the preparation took place, by involving central institutions, local self-government units, independent

institutions, minorities' associations, civil society and international organizations. They actively have contributed to the improvement of the final draft.

The Law represents steps ahead in Albania's commitments with respect to protection of human rights in general and minorities' rights and freedoms in particular. This law aims at ensuring the exercising of specific human rights of persons belonging to a national minority which are necessary to protect the distinct identity of national minorities as an essential component of an integrated society and which guarantee nondiscrimination and full equality before the law.

The law addresses the exercise of the rights in full conformity with FCNM provisions and based upon the relevant European experiences. According to the expertise of the Council of Europe, the Law addresses all major substantive issues to be dealt with in such a framework law on national minorities in a well-structured order. It fully reflects the contents of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the 'list of rights' used by the Venice Commission.

The Law "for the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Albania" stipulates for the first time a formal and legal recognition of all existing national minorities in Albania based upon the modern concepts of identification enshrined in FCNM and recommended by Council of Europe, OSCE and the European Union. It aims to ensure the full enjoyment and exercise of rights and freedom of the persons belonging to national minorities including: Greek, Macedonian, Aromanian, Roma, Egyptian, Montenegrin, Bosnian, Serbian and Bulgarians.

Every person belonging to a national minority is free to identify himself as such in the entire Albanian territory through self-identification. It further improves the

existing legal framework and guarantees to the national minorities wherever they live in Albania, equal and non-discriminatory treatment, as to all other Albanian citizens.

On the other hand the secondary legislation to be adopted soon followed by a comprehensive process of consultation aiming at ensuring the implementation of specific rights of persons belonging to national minorities, to protect and preserve the distinct identity of national minorities, non-discrimination and full equality of all citizens before the law irrespective of their ethnic origin and national identity.

Albanian authorities are firmly committed to implement the legal framework and policies on national minorities, to improve the institutional framework for addressing minority issues and to enhance dialogue with representatives of minorities.

Roma and Egyptian minorities

Roma and Egyptian minorities are among the poorest, most marginalized and socially excluded groups in Albania.

Albania has made considerable progress in meeting targets outlined in the National Action Plan for the Integration of Roma and Egyptians for 2016-2020. This Plan represents a commitment, which is targeted to the two respective minorities, reflecting a scale up of measures being implemented and also initiates new activities for promoting the integration of Roma and Egyptians, with committed funding from the State budget and funding gaps identified for the 2016-2020 period and finding the financial means through coordination with international

donations. Important political, social and economic reforms and actions, successfully are implemented for advancing access of Roma and Egyptians in quality public services.

The principles of our work on Roma and Egyptian inclusion are:

1. *Promoting social inclusion;*
2. *Using a targeted approach to address specific exclusion issues;*
3. *Respecting differences* between Roma and Egyptian communities, as well as within these communities.
4. *Emphasizing the engagement of Roma and Egyptians, related to the mechanisms for engagement of Roma and Egyptians in the design, implementation and monitoring of public policies.*
5. *Measuring progress* – There are a set of indicators for measuring progress in implementation of the action plan and of the government work.
6. *Gender dimension*
7. *Budgeting for implementation* – the line ministries have identified a budget for the implementation of the action plan. In cases when public funding is insufficient, the ministries also identified funding gaps where donor assistance is asked.

The National Action Plan for integration provides measures to comprehensively address the situation of Roma and Egyptians in Albania in the field of education and inter-cultural dialogue, civil registry and justice, social protection, employment, education and vocational training, urban housing, and health care, as well as coordination and monitoring policies. Sufficient resources are allocated for its implementation, and its progress tracking is done by MHSP.

To improve coordination in the field of Roma and Egyptian integration, **a network of seven focal points** has been created among the key ministries responsible for education, civil registration, health, employment, social housing and vocational trainings. A database of 57 focal points at the municipal level that coordinate policies for Roma and Egyptians has been created.

The electronic system RomAlb was developed, serving as a centralised web application allowing for collection and management of information on Roma and Egyptian minorities at all levels. The system is currently being upgraded to align the indicators with the NAP. Twelve trainings were conducted for public servants at the central and local level in 2017, with 190 public employees being trained and supervised at their workplace in the use of the system.

According to the 2017 Regional Roma Survey:

- The compulsory education enrolment rate of marginalized Roma children significantly increased in Albania from 2011 to 2017.
- Notable progress among marginalized Roma resulted in a decrease in the gap with respect to non-Roma neighbours from 42 %s in 2011 to 30 % in 2017. Completion rates in compulsory and upper secondary have been increasing as well. Some progress has been made also on personal documentation: nearly all marginalized Roma as well as non- Roma living in their vicinity have birth certificates, and coverage of ID cards has been increasing. Access to personal documents has improved for both groups.

During 2017 the mechanisms that facilitate the access to **the civil registration service and free legal aid** to members of Roma and Egyptian communities were improved.

- 427 Roma and Egyptian children were identified as unregistered against 267 reported during 2015. 70% of cases were registered and others are in the process.
- 1,082 Roma and Egyptians were informed about civil registration procedures during their resettlement change.
- 4 new legal clinics have been set up in the Courts of Tirana, Durres, Lezhe, and Fier courts, with the support of donors, which are implemented by local organizations. These clinics are operational and have access to members of Roma and Egyptian communities.
- There are no data from state institutions responsible for free legal aid related to the functionality of state-run legal clinics.
- During 2017 more Roma and Egyptians were informed about forms of trafficking and 100% of trafficked cases are in defense and assisted with reintegration services.
- 105 potential **victims of trafficking**, as well as victims of trafficking (members of the Roma and Egyptian communities), have been identified and reintegrated.
- Eight waiting offices have been set up at the border crossing points in order to provide the preliminary service to victims of trafficking.

Education and Promotion of Cultural Dialogue

In 2017, 13.5% of Roma and Egyptian boys and girls have completed all levels of education compared to 2015. There is still a problem with the registration of Roma

and Egyptian children in 9-year education. The enrolment rate in this education cycle is 66% versus 100% of the rest of the population.

- 13,583 Roma and Egyptian boys and girls have enrolled and attended pre-school and compulsory education during 2017 compared to 4,437 reported during 2015
- 99 Roma and Egyptians were employed as teachers in pre-school education and compulsory during 2017 versus 93 reported in 2015.
- During 2017, no school and segregated class were reported.
- 159 Roma and Egyptian students had benefited from scholarships at different levels of education during 2017 versus 100 reported cases in 2015.
- 32 Roma and Egyptians benefited from quotas at universities in all areas during 2017 against 26 reported in 2016.
- 1,704 Roma and Egyptian parents participated in postgraduate courses with their children during 2017 versus 1,106 reported in 2016.
- 130 Roma and Egyptian parents are members of school boards versus 98 reported in 2015

Health care

100% of Roma and Egyptian community members have access to basic health care. More efforts must be made by state institutions to involve Roma and Egyptians as employees in health institutions in order to increase the quality of service for members of both communities.

- 30,354 Roma and Egyptians were provided with free health cards during 2017 versus 3,368 reported in 2015.

- 2,059 Roma and Egyptian mothers have received baby and mother care package during 2017 against 300 mothers reported in 2015.

Housing and urban integration

More Roma and Egyptian families are involved directly or indirectly in housing programs.

- 508 Roma and Egyptian families benefited during 2017 through the small grants program by the municipalities for new infrastructure, water supply, sanitation facilities versus 187 families reported in 2016.
- 60 Roma families (approximately 300 inhabitants) benefited from improved living conditions in Tirana.
- 219 Roma and Egyptian families across the country benefited from rented social housing.
- 101 Roma and Egyptian families benefited from low-cost housing versus 37 families reported in 2016.

Social protection. More Roma and Egyptians are involved in social protection programs during 2017. Positive efforts have been made to increase the number of Roma and Egyptians involved in reintegration programs for work.

- There is a need for continuous capacity building of social administrators who should facilitate access to Roma and Egyptian services.

-More efforts must be made to enhance the reintegration skills of Roma and Egyptian families emerging from the Transit Center.

Specific data

- 1,717 families (8,587 individuals) Roma and Egyptians benefited from the scheme of economic aid during 2017 versus 8,000 individuals reported in 2015.
- 2,012 Roma and Egyptians benefited from public and non-public residential centers during 2017 versus the 235 reported in 2015.
- 899 Roma and Egyptian children have followed compulsory education and consequently, their families have benefited from extras in economic aid versus 120 children reported in 2016.
- 48 community centers were created and were functional and serving members of both communities in 2017 versus 4 reported in 2016.
- 10,258 Roma and Egyptians have been informed about health problems including mental, physical, reproduction, use of dribbling, etc. by mobile teams during 2017 versus 2000 reported in 2015.
- 2000 promotional materials were produced in the Roma language during 2017 against 0 reported for 2015.

Distinguished experts

Several laws have been adopted and amended during the reporting period, strengthening the human rights framework in Albania:

- Law No. 7895/1995 ‘On the Criminal Code’ has undergone a series of amendments and addenda, including definition of several criminal offences, and provided for more severe criminal sentences in the field of gender-based violence and child protection.

- Law No. 108/2014 ‘On the State Police’ was amended, strengthening actions in the field of domestic violence and trafficking, protection measures for women and children and inter-institutional collaboration.
- Law No. 121/2016 ‘On Social Care Services’ regulates the social care services, supporting the fostering of the well-being and social inclusion of individuals in need of social care and their families.
- Law 18/2017 ‘On the Rights and Protection of the Child’ defines the duties and strengthens institutions, structures and mechanisms that will guarantee and ensure respect for children's rights by individuals, the family and the state. The Law placing particular emphasis on strengthening the system of protection of children from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect, including, notably, at the local level.
- Other relevant amendments include those undertaken in 2015 of laws No. 9062/2003 ‘On the Family Code’.
- Law No. 37/2017 ‘Code of Criminal Justice for Children’, entering into force on 1 January, 2018, importantly strengthens the justice system aimed at protecting the child in contact with the law based on his or her best interests.
- Law No. 111/2017 ‘On Legal Aid Guaranteed by the State’, which entered into force in June 2018 and which reforms the procedures and mechanisms of providing aid guaranteed by the state. The Law recognises primary and secondary legal aid and the possibility of exemption from fees and court expenses. A registration system is foreseen, improving age-disaggregated data collection and management of applicants, beneficiaries and progress and provision of state-guaranteed legal aid.

- Law No. 22/2018 ‘On Social Housing’ was adopted in 2018, providing for several provisions allowing the access to the social housing programmes.
- Law 47/2018 ‘On Measures against Violence in Family Relations’ has been amended to ensure compliance with the CoE Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) and the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Comprehensive policies and strategies

- **The National Agenda for Children’s Rights 2017–2020 (NACR)** was adopted in 2017 and has three strategic pillars: (i) good governance for the promotion, implementation and protection of child rights, aiming at strengthening the regulatory and institutional framework for children’s rights and child protection, (ii) elimination of all forms of violence against children, and (iii) child and adolescent-friendly systems and services, namely development and education, justice, health and nutrition, and social protection, aiming at identifying key measures for sectoral strategies that achieve progress in implementing children’s rights.
- The Social Protection Strategy 2015–2020 aims to establish a consolidated and comprehensive system of social protection to combat social economic inequalities and protect all individuals in need. The strategy foresees transformation of economic assistance into an active social reintegration scheme, review of the disability assessment system and interventions and reintegration of children into families and communities, giving highest priority to the child’s best interests and providing for integrated services.

- Following adoption of the Code of Criminal Justice for Children 2017, the National Action Plan (NAP) on Juvenile Justice 2018–2021 was adopted in September 2018. The NAP breaks down the Code into concrete measures and activities for all responsible institutions.
- Over the reporting period, several other strategies and action plans have been adopted in the fields of, among others, social housing, sexual and reproductive health, the fight against trafficking, rights of persons with disabilities, and integration of Roma and Egyptians, aiming at enhancing implementation of the rights of the children in Albania.
- The National Action Plan for Non-discrimination on the Grounds of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity 2012–2014 and the National Action Plan for LGBTI Persons 2016–2020 foresee several measures to address discrimination and integration of these groups. The strategic goals are: 1. Improving the legal and institutional framework, as well as raising awareness on non-discrimination and protection of LGBTI people's rights, in line with international standards; 2. Eliminate all forms of discrimination against the LGBTI community, through capacity building of law enforcement structures; and 3. Improving access to employment, education, health, housing and sports for LGBTI persons, while guaranteeing their equal opportunities.
- The Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016–2020 provides for a comprehensive multi-sectoral response to gender-based violence and domestic violence and contains several measures with a direct or indirect impact on preventing and addressing violence against children and supporting the child victims. The strategy also provides for measures for rehabilitation of the violator.

- The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for cases of violence in family relations was established at the local level in 61 municipalities (out of the then total of 66 municipalities). NRM is composed of three structures: the steering committee, the technical team and the local coordinator, which cooperate to provide the necessary assistance to the victims of domestic violence. In most cases, the local coordinator is also a CPU worker, facilitating a more coordinated approach to addressing incidents of domestic violence. Standards of services for victims of domestic violence (DV) have been developed and, with DCM No. 430/2016, national service counselling standards for victims of domestic violence adopted.
- **An online registration system** capturing statistical data on domestic violence at the local level is operational. The system registers every case of violence identified and addressed by the local referral mechanism. **Since the launch of the system, 2,649 cases of domestic violence have been registered, with 861 cases registered during 2016 and 758 in 2017.** Information is captured by the system on the perpetrators and the victims, disaggregated by, among others, vulnerability, ethnicity, gender, disability and employment status.
- The provision of services to victims of domestic violence has been strengthened. The National Reception Centre for Victims of Domestic Violence, established under the SSS in 2011, provides 24-hour multidisciplinary services, including long-term housing (more than 6 months, or longer in the case of a longer protection order) for women, girls and boys up to 16 years of age. The number of children accommodated annually is relatively consistent, from 38–59 cases per year. Besides the national centre, six non-public entities, funded by the state budget, provide residential services: two in Tirane and one each in Berat, Korce, Elbasan and Vlore.

Fight against trafficking

- The legal and institutional framework **in the field of trafficking** has improved, and includes amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code (Law 35/2017) and an improved position and access to the criminal process for the victim. Law No.121/2016 ‘On Social Care Services’ places a requirement on all institutions responsible for treatment of a trafficked persons including child to take all specific measures and actions for their assistance and support until full recovery, in order to find a lasting solution. Adoption The law ‘On State Police’ provides for additional safeguards for the protection and comprehensive support for victims of trafficking, especially children.
- The National Strategy on the Fight against Human Trafficking 2018–2020 is organised around four main pillars (investigation and criminal prosecution, victim protection and assistance, prevention, and coordination), with a calculated a budget for its activities.
- The Cross-sectoral Strategy on the Fight against Organised Crime, Illicit Trafficking and Terrorism 2013–2020, increasing the efforts in the fight against trafficking of persons. Strengthening international and inter-institutional cooperation with all stakeholders, in particular with the Serious Crimes Prosecution Office, which deals with trafficking cases of women, vulnerable groups and children.

- Since 2017, **twelve Regional Anti-Trafficking Committees** have been established, comprising local officials and NGOs working on prevention and victim assistance. The prime minister issued an order to strengthen the RATCs by mandating the government agencies required to participate, namely social services, law enforcement, labour inspectors, and health representatives.
- Government supports a public specialised National State Centre for women and child victims of trafficking and three non-public treatment centres for victims and potential victims of trafficking. One of this NGO-run shelter provides specialised services for victims younger than 18 years. The four shelters comprise the National Coalition of Anti-Trafficking Shelters, offering complementary services for victims of trafficking. The individuals in the centres/shelters receive an assistance package composed of food, counselling, legal assistance, medical care, educational services, textbooks for child victims, employment services, assistance to the children of victims, financial support, long-term accommodation, social activities, vocational training, and free access to health care. Over the period 2012–2018, 198 victims of trafficking or potential victims of trafficking were accommodated in the National Centre, and 398 in three other centres.
- The concept of pre-detention centres functioning as rehabilitation facilities has been subject to continuous improvement with various procedures and mechanisms, such as the requests and complaints mechanisms, protection of personal data and confidentiality, and improvement in the general conditions of penitentiary institutions. Security room facilities have been set up or reconstructed in the Tirane Local Police Directorate, as well as in seven

police commissariats, to meet the conditions for the maintenance of humane treatment of detained or arrested individuals.

- The General Directorate of Albanian State Police through the administrative acts, produces and continuously monitors all structures and employees of the State Police to fulfill their duty in accordance with the law, not to use physical force pursuant to the legal conditions and procedures, the prohibition categorically to the exercise of physical/psychological violence or other physical ill-treatment, to persons to obtain data, information and statements relating to the commission or not of various criminal offenses.

Distinguished members of Committee,

Nationality / ethnicity of victims of trafficking

The National Strategy for Combating Human Trafficking and the Action Plan 2014-2017 is an instrument that gathers all interested state and non-state actors, as well as international partners, in an agreement on the situation regarding the human trafficking, the challenges raised and how they can be overcome. The strategy and the action plan lay the foundations for such a fruitful and harmonious multi-institutional approach, as it establishes the necessary framework for co-ordination and co-operation between all actors and their respective roles and responsibilities.

One of the factors contributing to trafficking is the country's socio-economic situation, which plays an essential role in increasing trafficking opportunities, mainly women and children, for a variety of purposes, including sexual abuse, forced begging, and other forms of forced labor, both inside and outside the country. Roma or Egyptian children carry a much higher risk of trafficking and abuse; belonging to an ethnic minority group is associated with poverty. Also,

domestic violence is seen as a phenomenon closely related to trafficking. It is considered as a factor that not only precedes but also accompanies the phenomenon of trafficking, where it is most prominent in Roma and Egyptian communities.

For the period January-December 2017, the number of victims/potential victims of trafficking results to be 105, of which 26 are victims of trafficking and 79 potential victims of trafficking, 25 men and 80 women, 49 adults and 56 children, 96 Albanians and 9 foreigners. Out of total 9 victims/potential victims of trafficking are Egyptian ethnicity, 1 is Roma, and the rest are majority.

For 2016, the number of victims / potential victims of trafficking results to be 95, of which 33 victims of trafficking and 62 potential victims of trafficking, 11 males and 84 women, 51 adults and 44 children, 87 Albanians and 8 foreigners . Of the total number of victims / potential victims of trafficking, 12 victims / potential victims of trafficking are of Egyptian ethnic and 8 victims / potential victims of trafficking are Roma.

Thus, compared to 2016, there is a decrease in the number of Roma and Egyptian victims of trafficking by 50% (from 20 victims / potential victims of trafficking Roma and Egyptians in 2016, to 10 victims / potential victims of trafficking in 2017).

While for the 9-months period January-September 2018, were identified 59 victims / potential victims of trafficking. Of the total number of victims / potential victims of trafficking, 4 are Roma and no Egyptians.

Government supports a public specialised National State Centre for women and child victims of trafficking and three non-public treatment centres for victims and potential victims of trafficking. One of this NGO-run shelter provides specialised services for victims younger than 18 years. The four shelters comprise the National Coalition of Anti-Trafficking Shelters, offering complementary services for victims of trafficking. The individuals in the centres/shelters receive an assistance package composed of food, counselling, legal assistance, medical care, educational services, textbooks for child victims, employment services, assistance to the children of victims, financial support, long-term accommodation, social activities, vocational training, and free access to health care. Over the period 2012–2018, 198 victims of trafficking or potential victims of trafficking were accommodated in the National Centre, and 398 in three other centres.

During implementation of the strategy and action plan, have been performed all the activities provided in them, as well as some awareness activities in Roma and Egyptian communities, informing about the phenomenon of trafficking in persons, the factors affecting them, preventive measures. Also, training was provided for field professionals, mainly locally, to identify, refer to, protect and assist vulnerable groups, including these categories. Currently, the new National Action Plan for the Fight against Human Trafficking has been drafted, pending approval, where specific objectives and activities for vulnerable groups, including Roma and Egyptian communities, are provided.

Asylum seekers

The Law No.121 / 2014 "On Asylum in the Republic of Albania" has provided for all rights related to asylum seekers, such as:

- Non-return policy;
- The right to be informed;
- The right to a translator;
- The right to have legal assistance at all stages of the interview;

In particular, vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied children, people with health problems, potential victims of trafficking, etc. are treated.

As a conclusion, all rights provided in the Report are provided to the category of Asylum Seekers and there has been no case of appeal to the abovementioned cases.

Illegal Immigration"

In Western Balkan countries (including Albania), illegal immigration of African and Asian descent (from LMAV countries - Middle East and North Africa) trying to use the countries of this region to reach European Union countries, has been identified as a phenomenon for many years, and its forms of development are varied;

1. A sustainable policy has been developed to combat illegal immigration and trafficking in human beings. Albania has also ratified most of the international human rights instruments and major conventions on migrant rights. Albania is successfully implementing most of the international conventions on migrant workers and the domestic migration legislation generally reflects the principles of international conventions on immigrant rights.
2. The Albanian migration norms (Law no.108/2013 "On Foreigners", amended) provide for treatment conditions for foreign nationals from third countries seized at the border. In this regard, most voluntary withdrawal procedures have

been applied and partially dealt with in the Closed Center for Foreigners in Kareç, following the return procedures on the basis of bilateral agreements between Albania and the countries of origin / transit;

3. Illegal immigration has increased significantly during the period January to 24 June 2018, when the number of irregularly caught immigrants has reached 3160 people, or over 200% more than during the year 2017. The largest number consists of Syria, followed by those who come from Pakistan and the Kashmir region, then those who come from Iraq, Iran, Algeria and Morocco;

Distinguished members of the Committee,

We underline that there is a the need for tracking mechanisms on treaty bodies recommendations, and to enable governmental institutions to see how observations and recommendations are followed by establishing clear policies and actions in place, to measure progress and fulfil duly and effectively their reporting obligations. In this context, the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs of Albania with the support of UN Women and UNFPA developed a Human Rights Action Plan and Monitoring Mechanism to facilitate the monitoring process of the implementation of the UPR recommendations and other treaties by relevant State authorities. Albania is expected to undergo its third UPR review cycle during the May 2019 and a national report is expected to be submitted to the UN Human Rights Council in February 2019.

At the end, We believe that the recommendations to be provided by the Committee, will give us the right direction in taking legislative, administrative, and

institutional measures to improve the legal, institutional and policy framework for combating racial discrimination and the implementation of this international human rights treaty.

In this context, the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs of Albania with the support of UN Women and UNFPA developed a Human Rights Action Plan and Monitoring Mechanism to facilitate the monitoring process of the implementation of the UPR recommendations by relevant State authorities. Albania is expected to undergo its third UPR review cycle during the first half of 2019 and a national report is expected to be submitted to the UN Human Rights Council in February 2019.

Thank you