

For Immediate Release

October 23rd, 2008

Albanian Disability Rights Foundation organized on October 23rd, 2008 at the Rogner EuropaPark Hotel, a National Conference to announce to the Public the Report on the Implementation by the Albanian Government of the National Action Plan of the National Strategy on People with Disability (NSPD). This is the second in the series of the monitoring reports for NSPD and it includes the progress made during 2005-2007 by focusing on the status of progress in 2007.

Participants in the Conference, Deputy Prime Minister, Genci POLLO, Minister of Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Anastas DURO, USAID Mission Director, Roberta MAHONEY, Executive Director of the Albanian Disability Rights Foundation, Blerta CANI, and other actors from governmental and nongovernmental institutions who spoke in the Conference presented facts and findings that came out in the monitoring process.

The data for the monitoring report were mainly collected through six-region surveys with participants from Tirane, Shkoder, Durrës, Vlore, Elbasan and Korçe. The survey was conducted with participation of 113 government officials at the central, regional and local level, who provided official information on the status of progress on the measure assigned to their office, as well as representatives of four national disability nongovernmental organizations. 954 participant's people with disabilities and family members from the same six regions were also asked to evaluate the situation in the country in regards to the five areas of the National Action Plan – Accessibility, Services(Health care and Social Services); Education, Employment and Vocational Training, Capacity Building and Legislation through a quantitative-qualitative survey.

The Report acknowledges the increased awareness of the Albanian Government, its engagement in taking more responsibilities for improvement of disability legal and policy framework in Albania.

Still, findings from the monitoring process revealed unrealized tasks in all the five areas of the action plan of the National Strategy on People with Disability. An analysis of all the findings revealed that there has been no progress at all in 41 % of the total measures, only two measures have been completed on schedule, this means that the implementation has been delayed for 98% of the measures the National Action Plan.

As a consequence, half of people with disabilities and their families participating in the survey (51.8%) consider their financial situation to be poor; the communities where people with disabilities live continue to be inaccessible to them, 4,534 children with special needs between ages of 6-18 do not receive any form of education; People with disabilities and their family members gave opportunities for employment and vocational training a failing grade. The participants strongly believe that they are not considered as equal partners in the relevant decision making process at the local, regional and central level. They believe that majority of 102,945 officially recognized people with disabilities, are not treated as equal citizens, and they are discriminated against in many fields of life.

The NSPD was written to address the most basic needs of people with disabilities in Albania. The failure of the state agencies to realize the tasks according to the scheduled timelines indicates that work to promote awareness and accountability needs to be enhanced at all levels.

Constant monitoring of the national disability strategy by civil society tends to hold the Albanian government accountable, increase the responsibility and engagement of responsible governmental and non-governmental agencies to place disability in the agenda of the reforms, by challenging exclusion and promoting an all inclusive society.

Efforts of ADRF to monitor implementation of the National Strategy for People with Disability were enabled through financial support of United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the program of “Promoting the Human Rights for people with Disability in Albania.

Albanian Disability Rights Foundation is an Albanian non-governmental organization that has advocated for the human rights and people with disabilities since 1996. The ADRF empowers individuals with disabilities and their family member, provides technical and policy-level advice regarding human rights, and raises public awareness concerning disabilities.

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