



### **IPPF EN Oral statement**

### **Albanian Center for Population and Development (ACPD) - oral statement in the CPD 44<sup>th</sup> session - New York 11-15 April 2011**

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and Gentleman,

My name is Elona Gjebrea Hoxha and I am here in the capacity of Executive Director of the Albanian NGO (Albanian Center for Population and Development - ACPD) established in 1995 and an accredited member of IPPF (International Planned Parenthood Federation).

Since 1989, IPPF European Network has played a crucial role in establishing civil society actors in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. ACPD has been created within that context and was the first NGO in the country working in the field of Family Planning (FP) and is a leader in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR).

ACPD has advocated and supported the approval of important laws such as the abortion law, the reproductive health law and the gender equality law. The role of civil society has been extremely important in this area considering the fact that the country was isolated till 1990 and Family Planning and abortion were prohibited by law.

Albania's official population registered in 2009 (INSTAT, 2008) was estimated at 3,194,417. One third of the population is under the age of 25.

The political stalemate is damaging the functioning of democracy in Albania and hindering further important reforms, which are necessary for the country's progress on the path towards EU integration and the rule of law as well as for the stability of NGOs.

As regards women's rights, Albania has taken significant measures to strengthen the legal and institutional framework on gender equality and fighting domestic violence. A national strategy on gender equality and the eradication of domestic violence was

implemented for the period 2007-2010. Still women continue to be discriminated against in terms of access to employment, education and property rights.

In 2008, Albania joined the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 and adopted a national action plan focusing on education, employment and social protection, housing and infrastructure, health, social inclusion, equal opportunities, and cultural heritage. Nevertheless, the Roma community constitutes the most vulnerable minority group in Albania, facing widespread poverty, socioeconomic marginalisation and frequent discrimination, particularly regarding access to education, social protection, health, employment and adequate housing.

The DHS (2008-2009) the first one ever conducted in Albania shows that 59% of women of reproductive age use traditional methods and only 11% use modern methods. Albania is a low fertility country with a total fertility rate of 1.6. The fact that women are highly reliable on traditional methods shows that the women do want to control their fertility. This is underpinned by the abortion figures which show an abortion rate of 300 per 1000 live births.

ACPD has worked with the Albanian government to develop the national strategy on Reproductive Health which was approved at the end of 2009 but is still waiting for appropriate budget allocation and proper implementation.

Existing Albanian governmental health and social welfare services are not tailored to adolescents' needs, especially towards those that are at greatest risk who are often exposed to moral judgment. Health professionals do not possess the appropriate knowledge and skills to provide youth friendly services. The current curricula for sexuality education are not comprehensive and teachers are not trained.

The MDG 5b target of Universal access to reproductive health is important to achieve the ICPD and the MDGs. More investment in the field of sexual and reproductive health is needed to enable people, especially young people to choose reliable contraceptives in order to avoid unwanted pregnancy and abortion.

The government needs to invest seriously in the future of young people in the countries with low fertility level so they will have the right to make their choices based on informed consent and to have access to high quality services tailored to their specific needs.

We hope that by joining forces we can achieve a better life for our citizens and advance in the field of sexual and reproductive rights.

Thank you for your attention!