

**UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW FOR ALBANIA
SUBMISSION BY THE UNITED NATIONS IN ALBANIA
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Introduction

The following submission is made by members of the United Nations Country Team in Albania, one of the eight One UN pilot countries.¹ The submission provides information on the promotion and protection of human rights in Albania relating to the mandates of the various agencies and programmes comprising the UNCT. In this regard, the compilation does not attempt a comprehensive overview of the human rights situation in Albania.

I. BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK

A. Scope of international obligations

Core universal human rights treaties	Signature	Ratification or accession
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)	-	4/10/1991
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)	-	4/10/1991
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)	-	11/5/1994
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)	-	11/5/1994
Convention Against Torture and other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading treatment or Punishment (CAT)		11/5/1994
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	26/1/1990	27/2/1992
International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (MWC)	-	5/6/2007
International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance	6/2/2007	8/11/2007
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)	-	-

Optional protocols to core human rights treaties	Signature	Ratification
First Optional Protocol to the ICCPR	-	4/10/2007
Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR, aiming at the	-	17/10/2007

¹ Resident Agencies, Funds and Programmes participating in the Delivering as One UN Initiative are: ILO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM and WHO. Participating non-resident agencies are: FAO, UNAIDS, UNEP, UNESCO and UNV. Other UN and international organizations that are members of the UNCT are the IMF, IOM and the World Bank.

abolition of the death penalty		
Optional Protocol to the ICESCR (not yet open for signature)	-	-
Optional Protocol to CAT	-	1/10/2003
Optional Protocol to CEDAW	-	23/6/2003
First Optional Protocol to CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict	-	9/12/2008
Second Optional Protocol to CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography	-	5/2/2008
Optional Protocol to CRPD	-	-

Other relevant national and international instruments	Signature	Ratification
Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court	18/07/1998	31/1/2003
Selected treaties of the Council of Europe	See Annex 1	
ILO Core Conventions	See Annex II	
Principal national laws and strategies	See Annex III	

B. Constitutional and legal framework

The Albanian State has the responsibility under the 1998 Constitution to protect and respect human rights under article 3. The Constitution recognizes civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights which are indivisible, inalienable and inviolable and are the basis of the juridical order. The Constitution guarantees equality of all before the law and protection against discrimination on the basis of sex, race, faith and ethnic origin, language, political, religious or philosophical beliefs, education, economic condition, social situation or ancestry. The Constitution also requires the State to supplement private initiative and responsibility in relation to certain 'Social Objectives' such as the provision of care to persons with disabilities, the aged and the orphaned, the fulfillment of housing needs to citizens and employment under suitable conditions for all who are able to work. Article 122 of the Constitution incorporates international treaties automatically into domestic law.

The State has elaborated upon the rights recognized in the Constitution and international treaties through a series of laws, such as the Civil Code (1966) and the Criminal Code (1995). Recent legal developments have included the adoption of the Law on Gender Equality (2008), the entry into force of the Domestic Violence Law in 2007 and the passing of secondary legislation on domestic violence in 2008. There is now a new unit on domestic violence within the Ministry of Labour. UNDP and the OSCE assisted the Government in the drafting of the Gender Equality Law. The Government has also amended the Criminal Code recognizing exploitation of children as a criminal offence.² In 2008, the Government began to develop a Child Rights Code with a view to harmonizing legislation and policies, aligning child rights policies and standards to the

² European Commission, *Albania 2008 Progress Report*, Commission Staff Working Document (COM(2008)674: p.14).

broader development framework and the standards in the CRC and strengthening an adequate monitoring system.

C. Institutional and human rights structure

The Constitution establishes the separation of the legislative, judicial and executive powers. Two bodies established under the Constitution are particularly relevant to the promotion and protection of human rights. First, the Constitution established the People's Advocate (articles 60-63) whose powers were elaborated under the Law on the People's Advocate (1999). The People's Advocate comprises four sections dealing in turn with: (1) complaints and requests towards the central administration bodies, local government and third parties working on their behalf; (2) complaints or requests against the police, secret services, armed forces and the judiciary; (3) complaints not related to areas one and two as well as collaboration with NGOs and research into human rights issues; and, (4) the prevention of torture, particularly the undertaking of inspections in the framework of the OP to CAT. The International Coordination Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights renewed the People's Advocate 'A level' status in November 2008.

The Constitution established the Constitutional Court which, amongst its powers, guarantees and interprets the Constitution, reviews compatibility of laws with the Constitution and international treaties to which Albania is a party and provides final adjudication of individual complaints for violation of constitutional rights. However, fulfillment of 'Social Objectives' may not be claimed directly through Court.³

D. Policy measures

The National Strategy for Development and Integration 2007-2013 (NSDI) provides the overall framework to improve policy development and coordination, of particular relevance to the promotion and protection of economic, social and cultural rights. The NSDI is a synthesis of a series of sector strategies that cover areas such as social services and social assistance, social inclusion, the health sector and gender equality and prevention of domestic violence.

The UNCT has been active in assisting the Government in developing and implementing aspects of these strategies. For example, in response to the Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in relation to Albania's initial report under the CRC and dialogue through UNICEF and government officials, the Government significantly revised the National Strategy on Children and a comprehensive National Plan of Action (NPA) was formulated. The Government has undertaken significant steps to develop a monitoring framework of the NPA. A Technical Secretariat for Children (TSC) was established which is responsible for monitoring, evaluating and

³ Thus, while the Constitution recognizes that some economic, social and cultural rights are justiciable (such as the right to strike, equal access to medical treatment and the right to education), other rights such as the right to the highest attainable standard of health or care for the people who are orphaned, older-people or persons with disabilities.

coordinating the activities of institutions contributing to the realization of the rights of the child at national, regional and local levels. Similarly, UNDP is facilitating a participatory process to update the National Strategy for Improving the Living Conditions of Roma Minority in Albania with a view to aligning it to the Roma Decade Initiative.

II. PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ON THE GROUND

A. Cooperation with international human rights mechanisms

Albania generally has a good rate of submitting reports related to the various core human rights treaties it has ratified. The chart below sets out the last report for each treaty considered by the relevant treaty body and the date that the next report is due.

Conventions ratified	Last report considered	Next report due
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)	11/2006	6/2009
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)	10/2004	11/2008*
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)	8/2003	6/2007*
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)	3/2003	3/2007
Convention Against Torture and other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading treatment or Punishment (CAT)	5/2005	6/2007
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	1/2005	3/2009*
International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (MWC)	-	10/2008*
International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance	-	11/2009

*The asterisk notes reports which, on the information available, are overdue.⁴ UNICEF notes that the government is finalizing the report to the CRC.

Albania has not extended a standing invitation to special procedures but has received two to date: the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography, Juan Miguel Petit (31 October to 7 November 2005) and the Special Rapporteur on the protection and promotion of the right to freedom of opinion and expression (29 May to 2 June 2000).

B. Implementation of international human rights obligations

⁴ See OHCHR website:

<http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/NewhvVAllSPRByCountry?OpenView&Start=1&Count=250&Expand=2#2> accessed 12 May 2009.

Equality and non-discrimination

Data on the most recent Living Standards Measurement Survey (LSMS) show that the overall poverty rate declined from 25.4 per cent in 2002 to 18.5 percent in 2005 and 12.4 in 2009. However, in spite of these decreases in poverty, some areas are experiencing more rapid declines in poverty than others. Significantly, there has been a slow-down in the reduction of poverty in mountainous areas where poverty tends to be highest with little change since 2005, suggesting increasing inequalities in spite of recent gains.

In relation to equality between men and women, women face discrimination and human rights breaches in a number of areas, including: entrenched traditional stereotyping of the role and responsibilities of women and men and the resurgence of discriminatory elements of customary law (the *kanun*); higher unemployment amongst women in comparison to men; discrimination against rural women, specifically in the areas of owning and inheriting property; lower level of representation of women in high-level elected and appointed bodies; trafficking of women and girls (although diminishing); and violence, particularly domestic violence.⁵ The Government has taken some significant steps to improve the legal and policy framework for the protection of women's human rights, in particular the adoption of the Gender Equality Law in 2008. Notably, the new Electoral Code Law includes for the first time temporary special measures, including a 30 percent quota for women in Parliament to increase women's participation in decision-making.

The new Law on Domestic Violence offers new remedies for victims and gives responsibilities to the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of the Interior in this regard. A new unit on domestic violence in the Ministry of Labour has been established and several protocols have been adopted to assist professionals handle domestic violence cases. The Ministry of Labour, assisted by members of the UNCT, has undertaken capacity-building for social and health workers, police and local authorities.⁶ However, the European Commission has noted that the proportion of women suffering domestic violence is significant and increasing.⁷ INSTAT data indicates that 50.6 percent of women experienced emotional abuse, 39.1 percent were psychologically abused, 31.2 percent suffered from physical forms of violence and 12.7 percent from sexual violence.

In relation to women's social rights, there is a strong need to revise the Economic Aid Law. First, the Law should target individuals in need (and their dependents) and not households. As long as Albania's social protection programmes and policies target households instead of individuals, the feminization of poverty will not be addressed and women living in poverty will remain disadvantaged in comparison to men. Second, until the Law does target 'individuals', it should be revised to expand the categories of women eligible to be 'heads of households'.

⁵ CEDAW, Concluding Observations, 2003, (A/58/38: paras 68-78).

⁶ EC Progress Report 2008, *op.cit.*, p.14.

⁷ *Ibid.*

Article 59 of the Constitution recognizes the integration of persons with disabilities in society as a non-justiciable 'Social Objective'. In 2005, Albania adopted the National Strategy on People with Disabilities and the Social Inclusion Cross-Cutting Strategy includes a section on persons with disabilities. The 2005 Strategy promotes education and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, stresses support for the right to live in the community and encourages education of society generally of persons with disabilities. However, separation of persons with disabilities persists such as the practice of segregated education. Legislation on employment quotas for persons with disabilities is not well implemented.⁸ Albania has not signed either the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities nor its Optional Protocol.

There has been little progress in establishing a proper legal definition of discrimination and protecting against violence-based on discrimination. Civil society organizations have submitted a draft Law on Non-Discrimination although Parliament has not yet considered the draft.

Minority rights

Albania is home to several minorities including Greek, Macedonian and Serbian-Montenegrin national minorities and Roma and Aromanian ethno-linguistic minorities. The Egyptian community has not been attributed minority status to date. Article 20 of the Constitution protects the human rights of persons belonging to minorities and their equal protection before the law as well as their right to express freely their cultures, including being taught in their mother tongue. The Roma and Egyptian communities continue to suffer poverty, inequality and exclusion. Some of the main challenges facing these communities, particularly the Roma, include: discrimination in employment and education, particularly where education is available only in Albanian; inability to pay costs related to education such as school books; a lack of representation in the national Parliament and very low level of participation in local government; inadequate standard of living, including poor housing conditions due to overcrowding and lack of basic amenities such as water and sanitation; declining health due to lack of affordable health care and immunization services not reaching all Roma children; high unemployment and resort to informal work including human trafficking and prostitution; and, a lack of civic registration documents which in turn inhibits enjoyment of a range of human rights from access to health care to the right to vote.

Albania adopted the national Strategy to Improve the Living Conditions of Roma Minority in Albania in 2005, committing the government to release Roma from the trap of poverty and social exclusion. In 2008, Albania joined the Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005-2015), thus making a political commitment to promote social inclusion of Roma within a regional framework. A 2008 progress report on the Strategy, published with the assistance of the UNCT, indicates that implementation remains slow and the objectives of the strategy have not been successfully communicated to the local level while some key

⁸ *Social Inclusion Cross-Cutting Strategy*, Government of Albania, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, December 2007, p.38.

institutions lack information and plans for implementation. The report also observes that the body monitoring the strategy does not have sufficient human and financial resources to accomplish its mission. In December 2008, the Ministry of the Interior launched a project to identify and register with the civil register all unregistered Roma and ID cards are issued at no cost for Roma. In the current election campaign, Roma candidates are running for seats in Parliament with support of some mainstream political parties.

Right to life, liberty and security of the person

The Constitution protects the right to life and the right to liberty as well as freedom from cruel, inhuman or degrading torture, punishment or treatment.⁹ In 1996, Albania initiated a process of mental health reform, passing the Mental Health Act which sought to decentralize psychiatric services from hospitals to comprehensive care provided by multi-disciplinary teams as close to the home as possible. Since 2000, the World Health Organization (WHO) has supported the development of a strategic framework for the mental health reform and the implementation of local model services. The endorsement of the National Mental Health Policy Document (2003) and of the Operational Plan for Mental Health Service development (2005) paved the way for comprehensive action at the national as well as local level.

In spite of these reforms, there is evidence that the Law is not being respected. During several visits by WHO to the psychiatric hospital of Shkodra and Elbesan the issues of poor standards of care, a diet with low nutritional value, insufficient bedding and clothing, low hygienic standards and lack of heating were identified as major concerns. Other issues are undocumented isolation and the neglect of the right to information regarding own treatment and the right to privacy and free communication with relatives. WHO has brought this to the attention of the national authorities. Subsequently, WHO conducted a joint visit with the Minister of Health to Shkodra in March 2009, and a joint action plan has been formulated, followed by local interventions, coordinated by WHO.

The Ministry of Health has since taken some positive and concrete steps, such as the provision of new beds. However, much remains to be done such as the provision of better nutrition or on an integrated effort to improve living conditions and skills for the institutionalized patients. The issue of the poor diet has been taken up by the People's Advocate.

Administration of justice and rule of law

The Albanian constitution recognizes the separation of powers between the legislature, executive and the judiciary. However, respect for the separation of powers and the rule of law faces certain challenges, such as: excessive discretionary power and arbitrariness; insufficient criteria to interpret and enforce laws; reduced access to information and a need to promote greater transparency in decision-making; a need for more skilled and professional civil servants; a need to halt the high turnover of key staff;

⁹ Articles 21, 25, and 27.

slow and untransparent judicial procedures; and, limited enforcement of administrative or judicial decisions. These challenges have the effect of reducing the confidence of citizens in the State.

A cross-cutting Anti-Corruption Strategy was adopted in 2008. However, Albania still needs a reduction in the exercise of arbitrary power and favouritism among its public officials and more transparency in its rules and procedures, requirements must be listed and applied, and fees have to be indisputable and thus incorruptible. Pre-publication of laws and regulations before their approval, cost-benefit analysis of legislation to guarantee value and suitability of legal provisions prior to vote and publication of handbooks of administrative procedures are important steps yet to be taken.

In order to help counter the lack of expertise in public administration, the Government, with the support of the UNDP, has begun to encourage qualified Albanians abroad to serve in public administration positions and academia through its 'Brain Drain Programme'. A proposed Bill on the creation of the Administrative Court to handle complaints relating to State authorities has failed to pass Parliament so far putting on hold the future of the Commission on Civil Service. The Government still has to approve the public administration strategy.

In 2008, Parliament adopted the Law on the Organization of the Judiciary which includes salary scales as well as merit-based criteria for the appointment of judges.

On 16 February 2009, the Constitutional Court suspended the implementation of the 'Lustration Law', a law passed on 22 December 2008 which effectively prohibits people who worked during the communist era in the areas of the secret police, the judiciary or as prosecutors from government employment. The suspension continues until the Constitutional Court decides on applications from parliamentarians, professional organizations and civil society organizations.

The Law on Free Legal Assistance was adopted in December 2008. The Law provides for free legal services to juveniles, witnesses and vulnerable persons. Free legal services are currently provided for juveniles through an NGO financed by UNICEF in the Tirana, Shkodra and Korca pre-detention centres.

Significant steps have been undertaken, with international support, to systematize the training and capacity-building processes required to strengthen the State's skills in implementing the Gender Equality Law, the Domestic Violence Law and CEDAW. To date, through UN support, 10 percent of all police members have been trained on domestic violence issues and, through UN support, the Ministry of Health has started the integration of the assessment and treatment of women victims of violence into the Ministry's reproductive health services. To date, the establishment of posts of full-time Gender Experts in line-Ministries has not materialized even though this is foreseen in the Gender Equality Law.

The right to take part in the conduct of public affairs

In November 2008, Parliament adopted a new Electoral Code. Albania now has a regional proportional system replacing the previous mixed system although smaller parties have expressed concerns that the reform will favour larger political parties. In 2008, an electronic civil registry and address system was completed, improving the reliability of voters' lists, ID cards and other official documents. The Government issued ID cards and passports will be used as the main identification documents for the next elections which are due on 28 June 2009. The Opposition has voiced concerns about delays in issuing ID cards although the government remains confident that it will be able to issue them in time for the vote. As noted above, the Electoral Code includes a quota of 30 percent representation of under-represented gender on the national party lists put forward for the national elections. However, challenges remain and it will be important that the spirit of the Code is met so that the end goal of attaining 30 percent of Parliamentarians being women as well as a significant increase in the appointment of women to high-level decision-making.

In March 2009, Parliament adopted the Law on the Organization and Functioning of the Agency for Supporting Civil Society. The Agency will support activities aimed at encouraging the sustainable development of civil society and the creation of favourable conditions for civic initiatives with funds going towards research, participation in international events and trainings and scholarships for civil society. The Government has started to work with civil society organizations and the UN in support of the establishment of a Civil Society Index in Albania identifying strengths and weaknesses of civil society and providing opportunities to address capacity gaps.

The rights of the child

The dramatic political and socio/economic changes in Albania have increased the vulnerability of children to violence, exploitation, trafficking discrimination, abuse and neglect. While Albania continues to make progress in realizing the rights of the child, much remains to be done. Despite the broad legislative reform related children's rights, the existing mechanism of sectoral social policy - due to its fragmentation and absence of coordination in implementation - has been inadequate to reduce social exclusion significantly among children in vulnerable and marginalized situations. Moreover, social protection expenditures have declined as a percentage of GDP and as a percentage of Government expenditures even though the overall number of beneficiaries has not decreased at the same rate. With 149,000 families receiving social assistance benefits representing some 280,000 children reliant on social assistance,¹⁰ the risk is that many Albanian children are facing continuing and even greater risk of social exclusion.

The Government, with the support of UNICEF, adopted the National Strategy on Children in 2005. An Inter-Ministerial Committee, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, has been established and steps have been taken to develop an adequate monitoring framework for the Strategy, including the establishment of a Technical

¹⁰ INSTAT – 'Shqipëria në shifra', 2007.

Secretariat for Children in the Ministry of Labour. The Government is working towards the adoption of the Child Rights Code, expected later in 2009 which will harmonize all legislation relevant to the CRC and establish a formal mechanism for monitoring, evaluation and reporting on social exclusion of children. In relation to the right to free and universal primary education, the streamlining of birth registration procedures has improved school attendance and net primary school enrolment for 2008 was 92 percent; however, in areas densely populated by Roma communities, access to education can be as low as 13 percent. Child labour remains a problem with the number of children, mainly girls, working in areas such as fish processing, footwear and textiles increasing. In relation to trafficking, the National Strategy for Fighting Child Trafficking 2008-2011 was approved in 2008 with a view to assisting and integrating child victims of trafficking as well as to protecting children in poor families at risk of trafficking. In this regard, a national child helpline was established for children at risk.

In the area of juvenile justice, courts are increasingly applying alternative community service sentences, probation and parole; however, there are insufficient social workers and probation officers and judges do not always apply the alternatives.¹¹ Further, interventions on legislative reform in the area of juvenile justice remain fragmented which affects the reform process and long delays are still frequent in the processing of cases involving juvenile offenders. Indeed, current legislation allows up to three years for the pre-trial term, while the Committee on the Rights of the Child has determined that it should not exceed six months. Construction of a new juvenile rehabilitation centre in Kavaja was completed and opens in June 2009 which will relieve the main prison from hosting juveniles and therefore separate them from adult offenders.

Child Rights Units are being established in all twelve regional councils during 2009. The Units are part of local government and have the mandate to monitor the implementation of the regional plans of action for child rights as well as supporting implementation of child rights policies at the regional level. Further, Child Rights Observatories will be functioning in each of the twelve regions. The Observatories are staffed by civil society and designed to provide evidence-based policy analysis and to advocate for, monitor and evaluate public policies related to the rights of the child. So far, six Observatories have been launched. The Child Rights Units are expected to work closely with the Observatories.

III. ACHIEVEMENTS, BEST PRACTICES, CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS

One of the key achievements of Albania has been the relatively high level of ratifications of UN and regional human rights treaties it has reached over recent years, as well as the introduction of a series of laws and strategies aimed either directly or indirectly with implementing international standards in national law and policy. Early ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol could further add to this achievement. Another achievement has been the work of the People's Advocate, the Albanian National Human Rights Institution, which has

¹¹ EC Progress Report, *op.cit.*, p.15.

maintained its “A level status” before the ICC and continues to contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights standards.

However, challenges remain. In particular, closer attention should be directed towards providing the necessary financial and human resources to move from laws and strategies to practice and to ensure adequate monitoring of their implementation. There is a need for improved coordination of line-ministries to implement legal frameworks, in particular the Gender Equality Law and the Domestic Violence Law and a significant need for improved monitoring of strategies. Overall leadership and ownership at local level to pursue implementation is mixed – and should be strengthened - and not always related to a need for additional resources. In this regard, linking relevant strategies in the social sector to human rights standards accepted by Albania should provide a clearer means of identifying actors responsible for improving social inclusion in Albania while allocating responsibilities among those actors. Linkage to human rights standards should also help to empower those individuals and groups who are socially excluded, in particular through the strengthening of sector strategy monitoring and linking strategies to national, regional and international monitoring mechanisms.

Another challenge relates to the global financial downturn which could impede efforts to fulfil human development and human rights commitments. While not yet suffering a significant impact during the initial phase of the global financial crisis, Albania is more and more affected due to a combination of declining exports, tax revenues and remittances and increasing domestic budget expenditures. The IMF has suggested that the government avoid increases in the domestic budget in anticipation of the decline in revenue. It would be important that such budget measures take into account the governments responsibilities, particularly in relation to protecting the economic and social rights of those most affected and vulnerable to the economic crisis. Strengthening of justiciability of economic, social and cultural rights, some of which are recognized only as unenforceable ‘social objectives’ could help promote the legal empowerment of the poor and define a social protection floor in the context of the global crisis.

IV. KEY NATIONAL PRIORITIES, INITIATIVES AND COMMITMENTS

In 2006, Albania presented its candidature to be a member of the Human Rights Council. In its application, Albania pledged to uphold the highest standards of human rights and to remain strongly committed to major legislative reform and human rights monitoring. It made specific commitments at both the national and international level. Nationally, Albania committed: to increase public awareness, inclusion and harmonization of work among civil society government and private sector actors in the field of human rights; to promote a human rights-based approach through better integration of human rights in decision-making processes and policy implementation; to respect and promote the human rights of minorities, including through the establishment of the National Committee on Minorities. The National Committee is now established.

Internationally, Albania pledged: to ratify the Optional Protocol to the ICCPR and the two Optional Protocols to the CRC as well as amendments to CAT, CEDAW and the CRC;¹² to support strongly the efforts to strengthen OHCHR; and, to cooperate fully with the Human Rights Council and its special procedures. Notably, since making the pledges, Albania has ratified the two optional protocols referred to above.

V. CAPACITY-BUILDING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Albania's One UN Programme is based on the five pillars of: more transparent and accountable governance; greater participation in public policy and decision-making; increased and more equitable access to quality basic services; regional development to reduce disparities; and, environmentally sustainable development. The Programme incorporates the principles of gender equality and the development of national capacity throughout. The Programme has been developed giving a high priority to aligning international assistance with national development plans and budgets and Albania's efforts to accede to the European Union. Each of the five pillars and the cross-cutting principles plays an important role in promoting and protecting human rights in Albania.

Technical assistance and capacity-building areas include strengthening collection and analysis of disaggregated data; identification of gaps between laws and strategies and their implementation and building capacity to fill those gaps; promoting participation of women and social excluded individuals and groups in decision-making; strengthening evidence-based policy impact analysis; and, more clearly linking social inclusion strategies to international and regional human rights standards.

¹² Amendments to articles 17(7) and 18(5) of CAT; amendment to article 20(1) of CEDAW; and, amendments to article 43(2) of CRC.

ANNEX I

Core ILO Conventions	Ratification or Accession
Forced Labour Convention	25/6/1957
Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention	3/6/1957
Convention on the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining	3/6/1957
Equal Remuneration Convention	3/6/1957
Abolition of Forced Labour Convention	27/2/1997
Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention	27/2/1997
Minimum Age Convention	16/2/1998
Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention	2/8/2001

ANNEX II

Selected treaties of the Council of Europe	Signature	Ratification
Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms	13/7/1995	2/10/1996
European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment	2/10/1996	2/10/1996
Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities	19/6/1996	28/9/1999
European Social Charter (revised)	21/9/1998	14/11/2002
Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings	22/12/2005	6/2/2007
Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse	17/12/2008	14/4/2009

ANNEX III

Principal national laws and strategies
<i>Laws related to this submission</i>
Constitution (1998)
Civil Code
Criminal Code
Gender Equality Law
Electoral Code
Domestic Violence Law
<i>Strategies related to this submission</i>
National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI)
Social Protection Sector Strategy
Social Insurance Strategy
Health Sector Strategy

Social Inclusion Cross-Cutting Strategy
Gender Equality and Domestic Violence Prevention Cross-Cutting Strategy
National Strategy on Children
National Strategy for Improving the Living Conditions of Roma Minority in Albania
National Strategy on People with Disabilities
National Mental Health Policy Document