

Common Country Assessment

Albania

**Prepared for the United Nations System in Albania
by the
Albanian Center for Economic Research (ACER)
Tirana, June 2002**

Cover Art:
Kel Marubi, "Boga Landscape", Northern Albania, between 1900 - 1919

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1 Executive Summary

Which challenges do Albanians face in their pursuit of security and development, at both a local and national level? What are the patterns and emerging trends? What root causes lie behind the symptoms? Most importantly, how can concerned citizens and institutions advocate and work to alleviate poverty, reduce systematic inequalities, and achieve sustainable human development?

This Common Country Assessment (CCA) 2002 of Albania is a joint effort of United Nations (UN) agencies in Albania – with the support of representatives of the Albanian Government and Civil Society – to examine these questions and move towards a common approach. The Albanian Center for Economic Research (ACER), a local NGO, coordinated the collaboration, research and drafting.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan mandated the creation of CCA reports in each country with a UN presence, as part of a reform process to bring greater coherence to UN activity within each country. It is hoped that this CCA will be a valuable reference tool, a platform for program and policy development, and an instigator of further collaboration between the UN and its development partners.

This CCA is structured in 10 sections and the discussion of key development issues is contained in sections 3 through 8. These issues are grouped in sections according to the Human Security framework, a concept that emphasizes the central importance of people's ability to access resources and make decisions free of coercion and free of fear of losing that ability in the future. Each Human Security section highlights global conventions and commitments ratified by Albania especially the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a set of core development targets agreed upon in 2000 by 191 countries to be met by 2015.

CHAPTER 2: INTRODUCTION: "Albania at a Glance" provides a brief overview based on geographic, demographic, governmental, and

developmental indicators. It is complemented by statistics interspersed throughout the text and tables in the Appendices, especially Table 1 CCA Key Indicators. "What is the Common Country Assessment?", "Methodology", and "What is Human Security?" elaborate on the paragraphs above. "Transition Costs in Albania and the Region" places Albanian development issues in the context of historical and political forces in the region, and draws attention to the critical role of State Institutions in complementing and supporting the efficiency and equity of market institutions by building up Human Security and encouraging more pro-poor economic growth.

"Macroeconomic Background" looks at particular economic trends in Albania since the beginning of the transition towards a market system in the early 1990s, including the dramatic collapse of industry and the preeminence of agriculture in the economy. Only recently has Albania achieved a level of economic output comparable to the pre-transition level. "Regional and National Planning Context" discusses the commitment of the Albanian Government to the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS), the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, and eventual membership in the European Union through the Stabilization and Association Process. "Moving Beyond a Crisis Mentality" demonstrates the need for positive attitudes and preventative action, and it proposes that past success in areas of economic growth, building institutions, and expanding personal freedom should be followed by efforts to improve equity, institutional performance, and social cohesion.

CHAPTER 3: ECONOMIC SECURITY: This section begins with a multi-dimensional look at "Poverty" and high rates of internal and external "Migration". The uneven consequences of structural reforms have exacerbated poverty rates. Those are highest in rural areas which tend to rely upon subsistence agriculture; those farmers with surplus produce have difficulty

selling it because of uncompetitive practices and poor transportation networks. Some rural households supplement their income with remittances sent home by migrant workers and with the relatively small economic assistance provided by the Government. Basic services, primary health care and education services have declined during the transition, and qualified workers along with regular inhabitants continue to move into urban and informal peri-urban settlements, adding to the existing substantial stress on social services and infrastructure in those areas. Dealing with the large informal economy, harnessing remittances and supporting agriculture offer hope of encouraging pro-poor growth, along with measures such as micro-credit initiatives and efforts to reduce vulnerability and improve education. The ratio of illegal to legal emigration appears to be falling somewhat but continues to have serious consequences on the host and destination communities and the emigrants themselves. Improving economic opportunities, services, infrastructure, and incentives to return offer the best hope of slowing and eventually stabilizing internal and external migration.

CHAPTER 4: EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY SECURITY: “Women’s Empowerment” and “Minority Discrimination” discuss the worsening situation of women and Roma during the transition as employment guarantees were removed, economic dependency of women rose, and patriarchal gender roles and traditional stereotypes revived. Many women suffer domestic violence and have little decision-making power, while qualitative information suggests many Roma find themselves at the bottom of many socio-economic indicators as one of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in Albanian society. “Disadvantaged Children” looks at disabled children, institutionalized children, children in conflict with the law, and street children and child labor. Due to general attitudes and low enforcement of child protection measures, the rights of children in these vulnerable groups are not fully respected. These disadvantaged children have difficulty meeting their personal education and developmental needs, ultimately hindering Albania’s long-term development.

CHAPTER 5: SOCIAL SECURITY: The “Health Care System” and the “Education System” have experienced similar conditions during the transition, including a decline in quality due to insufficient resources, aging infrastructure, and departing qualified workers; and a decline in

access due to the pressures of rapid migration and an informal payment scheme that refuses supposedly universal service to those who cannot pay. The budgets of both services are rising but their ongoing decentralization and privatization should be closely monitored from the perspective of vulnerable groups. Public health is threatened by high infant and maternal mortality, rising drug use, infrequent use of contraceptives, frequent reliance on abortion for family planning, and poor knowledge of sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS which could rise quickly due to the behavior of certain high risk groups. Education institutions also need more manageable classroom sizes, some curriculum reforms, a teacher training system, greater attendance in pre-primary education, and measures to reduce the dropout rate.

CHAPTER 6: ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY: People depend upon the safety and usefulness of their surroundings, ranging from sanitary water supplies to adequate road networks. Both “Natural Environment” and “Infrastructure & Basic Services” are crucial for public health, sustainable community economic development, and the potential of industries such as regular and eco-tourism. The new Ministry of Environment and its partners must cope with rising air, water and soil pollution, soil erosion, over-fishing and falling biodiversity, and illegal logging, by enforcing better regulations and encouraging more sustainable practices in the areas of waste management, emissions, and expanding settlements. Overcoming chronic energy shortages in the winter, rehabilitating and expanding secondary and tertiary roads after completion of the main North-South and East-West corridors, lowering costs and increasing access to telecommunications and Internet services, and upgrading the provision of basic services are priorities that need to be met while safeguarding long-run environmental concerns.

CHAPTER 7: PERSONAL SECURITY: Episodes of regional instability and lawlessness have weakened public order institutions and have fostered multiple threats to personal security. This section focuses on the rise of “Organized Crime” and the “Trafficking & Smuggling of People” as some of the most urgent threats to personal security, where public officials are sometimes involved, and where international cooperation is necessary. Trafficking as a coerced activity involving kidnapping or deception is distinguished from smuggling as a paid service for gaining illegal

entry to a country. The “Proliferation of Small Arms” reveals how the availability of small arms increases the potential for violence, and how successful efforts to retrieve small arms from peoples’ hands have contributed to reducing criminality and improving peoples’ livelihood and sense of security. “Asylum System” addresses Albania’s position as a destination and transit country for irregular migrants. It describes the difficulty of offering them possibilities for local integration and discusses efforts needed to build capacity to meet international commitments towards asylum seekers.

CHAPTER 8: POLITICAL SECURITY: Under this section, “Corruption” discusses how lack of transparency and accountability has emerged as one of the largest obstacles to Albania’s development because it wastes resources and leads to inefficient decisions, it is costly to individuals and business, and it reduces Government revenue. Corruption risks growing to the point where it becomes ingrained in the culture if it is not controlled soon, by limiting people’s and institutions’ power and incentive to engage in corrupt practices. Reducing corruption requires a vocal and effective commitment from all elements of Albanian society to ongoing and new anti-corruption initiatives. “Strengthening Institutions” discusses recent advances and

room for further improvement in Democratic Institutions, the Judicial System, the process of Decentralization, Civil Service, Media, and Civil Society. It suggests how these groups, institutions and processes can become more responsible, accountable, transparent, effective, and responsive to the needs of citizens, as a prerequisite for sustainable development.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUDING REMARKS:

This section re-emphasizes the importance of consolidating the gains that have been made in the transition so far while seeking to extend the benefits to a larger portion of the population including the most vulnerable, improve the functioning of institutions, and foster a sense of community. Through a collaborative approach to the ongoing national process of assessment, analysis and policy-development, including this CCA and future updates to the CCA, the UN and its partners in Government and Civil Society can find their niche where each can use its unique capacity to support Human Security and Development in Albania. This section is followed by **CHAPTER 10: APPENDICES** containing “Indicators” to complement the statistics cited in the text, dozens of “References” – many of which have web links to facilitate further research, and a list of “Acronyms” used in the text.

2 Transition

THIS CHAPTER INCLUDES:

- Albania at a Glance
- What is the Common Country Assessment?
- Methodology
- What is Human Security?
- Transition Costs in Albania and the Region
- Macroeconomic Background
- Regional and National Planning Context
- Moving Beyond a Crisis Mentality

This map was provided by UNHCR Albania, and does not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the United Nations concerning the legal status of the country, territory, city or area, of its authorities, or the delimitation of frontiers or boundaries.

2.1 Albania at a Glance

The roots of the Albanian people are often traced to tribes known as the Illyrians who came to the Balkans around 2000 BC. Albania was controlled by foreign powers from 165 BC when it became part of the Roman Empire until 1912 when Albania gained independence from the Ottoman Empire.¹ After the Second World War (Liberation Day: November 29, 1944), Albania became an isolated totalitarian state, until the early 1990s when Albania joined other transition countries moving towards democratic governance and market driven economies. Setbacks occurred during widespread disorder in 1997 and during the Kosovo refugee crisis of 1999. Powerful forces are challenging Albania's development, such as high rates of internal and external migration, widespread corruption, and low Government revenue. They have a huge impact

on the availability and quality of services including health care and education. High inequality complicates development further in terms of income inequality, relations between men and women, differences between urban and rural areas, and the plight of certain vulnerable groups.

¹ Background Note: Albania – Profile, US Department of State, 2002. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/>; Figures were also taken from: Preliminary Results of the Population and Housing Census 2001, Instat, 2001; Women and Men in Albania, Instat, December 2001.

Land

Geographic Setting Situated in the southwestern region of the Balkan Peninsula; bordering the Adriatic Sea and Ionian Sea, (362 km coastline); Albania is bordered by Greece in the Southeast, by Montenegro in the Northwest (part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia²), by Kosovo in the Northeast (currently a UN administered territory), and by the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in the East. (1,094 km of borders)

Area 28,748 square km

Physical geography Mostly mountains (28%) and hills (47%); small plains (25%) along coast; Lowest point: Adriatic Sea 0 m; Highest point: Maja e Korabit (Golem Korab) 2,753 m

Population

Population 3.087 million

Population density 113.3 inhabitants per square km

Population Growth 0.88%

Socio-Demographic Structure 42% of the population live in urban areas while 58% live in rural areas

Official Language Albanian, Tosk dialect

Government

Official Name Republic of Albania, Republika e Shqiperise

Major Cities Tirana (capital, 700,000); Others: Durrës (400,000), Shkoder (81,000), Vlore (72,000)

Political System Parliamentary democracy; Constitution adopted by popular referendum November 28, 1998

Branches

Executive: President (chief of state)
Prime Minister (head of government)
Council of Ministers (cabinet)

Legislative: Unicameral People's Assembly or Kuvendi Popullor with 140 seats, 4-year terms)

Judicial: Constitutional Court, Court of Cassation, multiple appeals and district courts

Administrative and Territorial Division

The country is divided into 12 Regions/Prefectures as well as 36 + 1 Districts (the Municipality of Tirana has district status). There are 65 Municipalities and 309 Communes

Human and Social Development**Human Development Index Rank (2001)**

85th ranking out of a total of 162 countries

GDP Per Capita GDP per capita was 1,094 USD in 2000 of which agriculture accounted for over half (51%)

Literacy Rate 88% in 2000

Unemployment Rate 14.4% in 2001

Poverty 46.6% of Albanians live below the poverty line of \$2 per capita a day, while about 17.4% survive below the poverty line of \$1 per capita a day

Life Expectancy 76,4 years for females, 71,7 years for males

Infant Mortality 28 (per 1000 live births) in 2000

² Representatives of Serbia and Montenegro decided on March 14th, 2002 to change the name of their common state from Federal Republic of Yugoslavia' to 'Serbia and Montenegro', But at the time of writing this CCA the decision had not yet been approved by the Parliaments of Serbia and Montenegro.

2.2 What is the Common Country Assessment?

The CCA process is an opportunity for UN agencies within a country to collaborate with each other and with Government and Civil Society representatives to prepare for the United Nations Development Assistance

Millennium Development Goals

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Achieve universal primary education
- Promote gender equality and empower women
- Reduce child mortality
- Improve maternal health
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Develop a global partnership for development

Note: Specific targets are elaborated in relevant chapters.

Framework (UNDAF) and to assess and analyze key development issues for advocacy and policy dialogue.³ It is part of a package of reforms initiated by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in 1997 to bring greater coherence to the UN. The structure of the CCA report reflects the methodology initiated by the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and the contents reflect the themes of Human Security, national strategies, the UN niche, and international commitments particularly the Millennium Development Goals⁴ and core Human Rights Conventions.

2.3 Methodology

2.3.1 PREPARATION

The UNCT met in early and mid 2001 and worked with UN agency representatives to create a list of development issues for inclusion in the CCA, to draft terms of reference and to plan a timeline. The first brainstorming session of the Heads of Agencies raised as key development challenges: Gender and Generation Inequalities, Income, Black Economy, Weak Institutions, Corruption, Migration/Emigration, Poverty, Trafficking in

Human Beings, Arms, Drugs, Unemployment, and Infrastructure.

Issues and UN agency representatives were then elaborated and placed under two Thematic Groups: "Democratic Governance" and "Human Security". Democratic Governance issues were Law Enforcement, Weak Institutions, Public Administration and Civil Service Reform, Decentralization and Local Governance, Justice, Infrastructure, Integration, and Emergency Preparedness. Human Security

6 Human Rights Conventions with Compulsory Country Reporting

- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- The International Convention against Torture
- The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
- The International Convention on the Rights of the Child

issues were Poverty, Employment, Child Labor, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, Education, Health, Rural Credit, and Environment.

Both Thematic Groups prepared a matrix of the quantitative and qualitative indicators appropriate for each issue. The UNCT decided to hire a National Consultant and screened 11 local NGOs and individuals in September 2001. The Albanian Center for Economic Research (ACER) was selected to coordinate the process, gather research and draft the report. UN agencies completed preparations during two joint meetings of the Thematic Groups and then requested Government Ministries to provide focal points for future inquiries.

2.3.2 ASSEMBLY OF DATA AND INFORMATION

With the assistance of UN agencies, the National Consultant gathered data in late 2001

³ CCA Guidelines, United Nations, 1999. <http://rescoor.undp.org.tt/INITIATIVES/English-CCA.pdf>

⁴ A commitment made by 191 countries in 2001 to achieve 8 core development goals by 2015.

and early 2002 from published and electronic sources as well as directly from Government Ministries and the National Institute of Statistics (Instat).

2.3.3 ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS

Research was presented by the National Consultant in a total of 8 meetings of the two Thematic Groups, where UN agency representatives evaluated the quality of available empirical data and the significance of the observed trends. The National Consultant also carried out issue-focused interviews of Civil Society, Government and UN agency representatives on an individual basis. In January 2002 delegates and invitees from these three sectors were brought together in a full day Workshop to deepen the ideas, analysis and recommendations in the CCA by performing problem tree analysis of three crosscutting issues: High Rate of Internal and External Migration, Lack of Participation in Society, and Corruption and Organized Crime.

2.3.4 DRAFTING THE CCA DOCUMENT

From December 2001 through to June 2002 the National Consultant prepared a series of drafts that were distributed by e-mail, available on the UNDP web site, and presented at the Workshop. The drafts incorporated input received during Thematic Group meetings, feedback submitted by CCA participants, notes from consultation interviews, presentations made by focus groups at the completion of the Workshop, and reviews by the UNCT. CCA participants chose to retain Human Security as the overarching theme since it overlapped with Democratic Governance and is a better known concept that would enhance the document's coherence and relevance to the UN system.

2.4 What is Human Security?

Human Development is the process of expanding people's choices among opportunities they value, while Human Security implies that people can safely and freely make these choices without fear of losing in the future the opportunities they currently enjoy.⁵

The 1945 Charter of the United Nations mentioned Human Security and the 1994

7 General Dimensions of Human Security Identified by the UNDP in 1994

- Economic Security
- Food Security
- Health Security
- Environmental Security
- Personal Security from violence and crime
- Community Security
- Political Security

Human Development Report (HDR) further clarified this people-centered concept. It is a shift in emphasis from securing territory through armaments towards securing people through sustainable development.

Many researchers and the Governments of Japan and Canada in particular have observed strong links and important distinctions between Human Security and Human Development; Human Development tends to advance Human Security and vice versa, while a certain amount of Human Security can even be considered a precondition for Human Development. Setbacks in either one can undermine the other.

The threats to Human Security in Albania are many, but most of them fall under the 7 categories described in the 1994 HDR. 6 categories were chosen as the framework of analysis for the issues discussed in this Common Country Assessment of Albania, with some slight adaptations: Health Security was placed under the larger category of Social Security so as to include the crucial issue of Education;⁶ the definition of Environmental Security was broadened to include Infrastructure; the cross-cutting issues of Women's Empowerment, Minority Discrimination, and Working Children were unified under their common theme of Equality of Opportunity; and Food Security is discussed briefly under Economic Security.

2.5 Transition Gets in Albania and the Region

Albanians and the residents of many other countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS were deprived of many basic freedoms during the previous regime, including the right to own property. But they had indirect access to many productive resources through their

⁵ New dimensions of human security, Chapter 2 of HDR 1994.

⁶ As suggested in the 1999 UNDP/RBEC monitoring report on Human Security in SEE.

Government, which provided them with basic securities including relatively stable income, employment, residence, social services, social protection, consumption and food security. This allowed these countries to achieve higher levels of Human Development than other countries with relatively larger economies but less priority on Human Security.

These basic entitlements and rights could not survive without their widespread acceptance and protection by strong and stable social, economic and political institutions. The easing of Government control, which began with the death of the former dictator Enver Hoxha in 1985 and accelerated rapidly in the early 1990s, permitted large advances in personal and political freedoms but also depleted and undermined people's access to productive assets and their benefits, lowering Human Security and Human Development in Albania.

The 1999 Human Development Report⁷ for the region discusses the common costs of transition including:

- Persistently high levels of morbidity – infant and maternal mortality are very high, health care has deteriorated, and there is risk of a rapid rise in cases of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases.
- A rise in both income poverty and elements of human poverty such as malnutrition – some groups have been impoverished more than others, including pensioners, the disabled, migrants and refugees, and children. One third of Albanians are considered poor.
- A rise in income inequality and wealth inequality – one symptom is the large number of internally displaced people and high rates of migration.
- Rising gender inequalities – much fewer women participate in public life now that quotas have been removed, and both economic and personal security has fallen for women. This is due to factors such as their difficulty finding formal employment, the trafficking of women and children, and the erosion of social services and protection provided by the state.
- Deterioration of education quality and access – the cost of education to students and

families is rising, the quality of education is falling, and the number of private education institutions is growing rapidly.

- The rise in unemployment, underemployment, and informal employment - the official unemployment rate of 14.4% in 2001 surely understates the situation, and many people with jobs in the private sector are part of the large informal economy where employment is unstable and they are not insured for social programs. The informal economy also facilitates illegal activity including organized crime and lowers the Government's ability to collect tax revenue. The majority of the employed are underemployed.

To some extent these losses were inevitable in the medium term, and to some extent they were caused by decisions on the timing of economic reforms and the redefinition of the role of Government. Exiting the transition phase will require both the passage of time and the rebuilding of an economic and Governmental system that is consistent with, and supportive of, both Human Security and personal freedom.⁸

Regarding the role of Government in Albania, the pendulum has swung too far. During the transition the trend has been to minimize the role of the State in the name of privatization, decentralization, deregulation and market forces. The State is withdrawing from the universal provision of certain essential forms of social services and social protection. Neglected in the process is the critical role of State institutions to complement and support the efficiency and equity of market institutions, in order to provide a solid foundation for Human Development by building up Human Security and encouraging more "pro-poor" economic growth.

2.6 Macroeconomic Background

Albania's 28,748 square kilometers contain a population of 3.087 million. Since the beginning of Albania's transition in the early 1990s there has been a new phenomenon of high rates of emigration and unemployment, and there was an initial huge fall in economic activity (GDP⁹ fell about 40% from the 1989 level) accompanied by high rates of inflation. Political, economic and

⁷ Transition 1999, UNDP. www.undp.org/rbec/pubs/hdr99/

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Gross Domestic Product – the value of all goods and service produced in a country within 1 year. GDP statistics in Albania are unreliable due to incomplete reporting of economic activity.

social instability in 1997-98 led to the loss of over 1.3 billion dollars¹⁰ in private savings by Albanians and set back the country's development, but inflation is now stable and the economy has been growing since 1998; growth continued even during the destabilizing 1999 crisis in Kosovo. Population growth is estimated to be about 1% per year, and GDP per capita is roughly USD 1,100. At 7.3% in 2001, the real GDP growth rate is expected to remain near 7% over the next few years.¹¹ See Table 2 Main Macroeconomic Indicators. The 1990-2000 average annual growth rate of GDP per capita was 3.2%.¹²

Potential deterrents or threats to continued investment and economic growth include corruption and inefficient governing institutions; uncertainty over property ownership; poor transport and water infrastructure and chronic energy shortages; an undeveloped financial sector where the Government crowds out private borrowing; and high dependency on potentially volatile income sent home by migrant workers (remittances).

Agricultural activity accounted for 51% of GDP in 2001 since the heavy manufacturing sector collapsed early in the transition, partly compensated by an increase in light manufacturing for export. Construction is the leading component of the service sector. Growth can be largely attributed to private investment, much of which comes from remittances. Foreign investment is negligible due to persisting problems such as inadequate infrastructure and the risk of losing investment or property rights.

Italy is Albania's main trading partner, followed by Greece; non-EU trade still accounts for only a small portion of total trade. The large trade deficit is equivalent to about 20% of GDP, financed mainly through foreign aid and remittances. The IMF considers the fiscal deficit, financed by foreign aid and domestic borrowing, to be sustainable.

2.7 Regional and National Planning Context

Throughout its transition Albania has been inundated with demands for the signature, ratification, and implementation of hundreds of treaties, conventions, protocols, strategies, and

Main Objectives of the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy for Albania

- Real GDP growth of 22-25% during the entire three-year 2002-2004 period
- Reduction of the number of people living in poverty with the aim of alleviating poverty, in particular, for worst-affected social groups and areas
- Tangible improvement of infrastructure and related services, such as supply of potable water, electric power, sewage etc., increasing the access of the poor to these services
- Reduction of infant and maternal mortality rates and disease incidence
- Increase of the level of 8-year (elementary) and secondary education enrollment and average schooling period

Source: <http://www.seerecon.org>

action plans. Three initiatives in particular have attracted serious attention from the Government: The Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS), the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP), and the Stability Pact (SP) for South-Eastern Europe. In 2001 Albania joined the World Trade Organization.

The preparation of a GPRS for 2002-2004 with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund was a precondition for further international lending, and the strategy has become the central planning document of the Albanian Government. Called the National Strategy for Socio-Economic Development by the Government, it is being elaborated through sub-strategies and action plans in many Ministries, and it is being integrated with other planning tools including the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), the Public Investment Program (PIP), and the Strategy for Decentralization. As yet the GPRS does not seriously address Albania's large informal economy.

The Government has already begun harmonizing its legislation with European standards since Albania's long-term strategy is to join the European Union (EU). Negotiations opened in 2001 for the first phase of this process,

¹⁰ National Conference on Household Living Conditions Measures, Instat, 2001.

¹¹ GDP and population statistics from the Ministry of Finance and the IMF, 2002.

¹² State of the World's Children 2002, UNICEF. <http://www.unicef.org/sowc02/>

the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA).¹³ In general Albanians are optimistic about the expected results of accession, emphasizing benefits such as the free movement of people within the EU. Awareness and public discussion is almost absent for some other aspects, such as the potential impact on Albania's large uncompetitive agriculture sector. Albania's eventual conclusion of an SAA with the EU would

Albania and the European Union

- 1992: Trade and Cooperation Agreement between EU and Albania, Albania eligible for Phare funding
- 1997: EU "Regional Approach" to South East Europe sets out political and economic conditions for bilateral relations
- 1999: Stability Pact, Stabilisation and Association process, and Autonomous Trade Preferences
- 2000: Albania gains duty free access to EU markets for many products
- 2001: SAP Commission recommends opening negotiations with Albania on Stabilisation and Association Agreement

commit Albania to negotiate bilateral free trade agreements with other countries that have signed an SAA with the EU. This regional integration must occur before the EU will permit SAA countries to enter the Union.

Albania already benefits from various unilateral trade preferences¹⁴ extended by the EU, and from 1991 to 2000 Albania received 1021 million Euro in aid from the EU.¹⁵ Albania has been recognized for the constructive role it has played in the region. Most recently Albania signed

"Without sustainable economic development, built on functioning public institutions, and founded on a strong civil society, concentration on the formal requirements for EU harmonisation and integration will be counterproductive."

Source: Evaluation of EC Strategy, 2001.

a free trade agreement with Macedonia in January 2002, and Albania is in the process of re-establishing normal relations with Serbia and Montenegro. The largest initiative to support regional integration and coordinate donor activity is the Stability Pact.

Signed between Balkan countries and foreign donors, the Stability Pact groups activities under three categories: Democratisation and Human Rights, Reconstruction and Economic Development, and Security (includes defense, justice, order, and anti-corruption). It also brings together regional leaders to share ideas and cooperate through agencies or regional strategies in areas such as migration and energy, taking into consideration their cross-border implications. The Stability Pact includes a Working Group on Trade Liberalization and Facilitation involved in the "Investment Compact" and the 2001 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on trade liberalization in the region. The expected outcomes of the Pact are slow in coming; some Quick Start Projects, scheduled to commence within one year of the establishment of the pact in 2000, have yet to begin.

See Table 3 Selected Important Memberships and Associations, Table 4 Free Trade Agreements in South Eastern Europe as of January 2002, and Table 5 Customs and Tax Agreements as of Mid 2001.

2.8 Moving Beyond Crisis Mentality

A fundamental characteristic of Human Security is that it costs much less to ensure Human Security through preventative investment than through reactive spending after a problem explodes. For instance it is not possible to prevent an earthquake, but it is possible to improve and enforce building codes so fewer people would be affected. Other kinds of crises can be prevented or mitigated if appropriate action is performed soon enough;¹⁶ it is important to monitor early warning indicators so that necessary diplomatic initiatives or socio-economic investments can be undertaken in a timely manner. See Table 31 Natural Disaster Profile of Albania, and the Web Site of the

¹³ Croatia and Macedonia signed SAAs in 2001

¹⁴ Autonomous Trade Preferences (ATPs), Nov 2000 – Dec 2005.

¹⁵ http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/see/albania For EU aid priorities see http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/see/news/ip01_1464.htm

¹⁶ The Albanian UNCT has prepared Emergency Contingency Plans since 1995, including a 2001 UN Inter-agency Contingency Plan based on a Refugee scenario. A broader document will be prepared with further scenarios in 2002.

National Early Warning System (NEWS).¹⁷ Ultimately it is the Government's responsibility to prepare for emergencies, but the international community can assist in the development and monitoring of indicators, information sharing, and the promotion of crucial mechanisms for follow-up by decision makers without which the process is of no use.

Where does Albania lie on the continuum between crisis, peace-building, and development? Some Albanians feel their country is stuck in transition, moving away from Communism without building towards a new system. Others already see remarkable changes in Albanian society after just over a decade since Albania emerged from 48 years of almost unprecedented isolation and centralized control.

As in many other countries, mentalities can become self-fulfilling prophecies. Young people in Albania long for and feel entitled to

the freedom and quality of life they perceive in the West, and many lack confidence in their ability to achieve it through hard work in their own country. It is difficult to meet their high expectations in the short term. Dedicated Albanians need to lead the way as role models who can demonstrate success, integrity, and a passion for their country, and an attitude of learning from rather than imitating the West.

While Albania remains vulnerable to crises, a passive abdication of responsibility for development is unwarranted. Albania has made important progress during the transition in the areas of economic growth, institution building, and personal freedom. These achievements should be duly recognized and consolidated, and emphasis should shift from economic growth towards addressing inequality, from building institutions towards improving institutional performance, and from expanding personal freedoms towards fostering social cohesion.

¹⁷ <http://undp.org.al/>

3

Economic Security

Millennium Development Goals

- **Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**
 - Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day
 - Halve between 1990 and 2015 the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

Relevant Human Rights Documents

- **The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**
 - Recognize the right of everyone to be free from hunger

3.1 Poverty

We commit ourselves to the goal of eradicating extreme poverty in the world, through decisive national actions and international cooperation, as an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of humankind

-1995 Copenhagen Declaration, World Summit for Social Development

3.1.1 DEFINITION

Poverty has many dimensions of which low income is only one indicator. For different people or groups poverty may mean higher vulnerability to risks such as malnutrition, disease, unemployment, or violence; insufficient access to the basic necessities of water, food and shelter; lack of access to health care and education to maintain and build personal capacity; and no voice in community decisions. These dimensions can

Reasons for caution using employment data in Albania:

- The 1995 law on employment considers all rural inhabitants who received land from privatization to be self-employed, and does not permit them to register for unemployment services from the government.
- There is no official data on employment in the large informal sector of the economy.
- It is Instat that calculates employment and MoLSA that calculates unemployment.
- Statistics are further complicated by temporary employment, such as seasonal employment and a public works program of the MoLSA that employs people for a month and removes them from the list of unemployed.
- On the other hand, it is likely that some people who register at the labor office do not always inform the office when they find employment. There is also a new phenomenon of informal workers from countries such as China or Egypt coming to Albania to work, especially in the construction sector.

be summarized as lack of opportunities, lack of capabilities, and heightened exposure to risks. The best approach is to examine a broad range of indicators and draw some general observations.¹⁸

3.1.2 ASSESSMENT

In spite of macroeconomic stabilization and progress, Albania remains the Eastern European country with the highest level of poverty, ranked 85th out of 162 countries on the 2001 Human Development Index.¹⁹ Albania has a long way to go to reach the central goal of the international community of reducing poverty to half of 1990 levels by 2015. The registered unemployment rate was 14.4% in 2001 according to the National Institute of Statistics, higher than the administrative calculation of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA). Unemployment is highest in the North of the country. The degree of inequality in national

¹⁸ GPRS 2002-2004, November 2001.

¹⁹ Human Development Report 2001, UNDP. The index is calculated based on life expectancy, literacy, school enrolment, and GDP indicators.

INSTAT/ World Bank Joint Observations on Poverty

- Larger and younger households are generally poorer.
- Education matters in reducing poverty, particularly above primary school. Universal secondary school enrolment is a poverty reducing strategy.
- As a whole, female-headed households do not appear to be at higher risk of being poor. However, among female headed households, female single and one-parent households are more than 60% more likely to be poor than their male counterparts.
- Remittances are a way out of poverty, more so for female-headed households.
- Sanitation is a problem in rural areas; crowding in urban areas.
- Poverty is strongly related to main sources of income. Agricultural workers are at much greater risk of being poor, with 2 out of every 5 poor working in agriculture.
- Unemployed heads of households are poorest, and rates do not differ between urban and rural areas.
- One out of every five poor is a pensioner. Pensioners in urban areas are less likely to be poor compared with rural pensioners (around five times lower).
- Better-off people are travelling larger distances to seek health care, perhaps a reflection of poor quality of service.

Source: National Conference on Household Living Conditions Measures, Instat and WB, 2001.

distribution as measured by the Gini Coefficient²⁰ in 1998 based on income was 0.43²¹ (high for Central and Eastern Europe), up from a 1996 figure of 0.28²² based on consumption and excluding Tirana. The change is explained partly by methodology differences and partly by deepening poverty.

According to the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy,²³ (i) measured in relative terms, 29.6% of Albanians are poor, half of whom live in the category of extreme poverty; in absolute terms, 46.6% of Albanians are below the poverty line of \$2 per capita a day, while 17.4% are below the poverty line of \$1 per capita a day; (ii) one in three families experiences problems with low-quality housing; (iii) there are serious problems with potable water supply, sewage, and roads (especially secondary urban and rural roads); (iv) maternal, infant and under-5 mortality rates are relatively high compared to other countries of the region; (v) 14% of children under age 5 are malnourished; (vi) illiteracy has increased (only 88% of the population aged over 15 is able to read and write); and (vii) in addition to lack of incomes, 75% of poor families experience acute social problems.

Poverty is more widespread in the country's remote and rural areas: four out of five poor people live in the countryside. Poverty

indicators in rural areas, compared to those in urban areas, are nearly double at every educational level, with the exception of higher education where poverty levels are equal. More than half of families with an unemployed household head are poor. The chances of being

Over one third of the poor have only primary education

poor are about six times higher for employed people living in the rural areas (32.6%) than for employed people living in the urban areas (5.3%). People on pension account for about 20% of poor people. The probability of the pensioners in rural areas including disabled people who receive pensions to live in poverty is twice as high as that of pensioners living in urban areas. Inadequate access to basic needs is not only confined to rural areas; 40% of urban households lack access to two or more basic necessities.

Data is often not available for rural and peri-urban areas, where economic circumstances tend to be more difficult. Some of the rapidly growing peri-urban areas are even more impoverished than remote rural areas; they consists of people who left rural areas and created unofficial settlements around the

²⁰ A measure of inequality ranging from 0 (perfect equality) to 1 (absolute inequality).

²¹ Results of Household Living Conditions Survey (LCS) October 1998, Instat, July 2001.

²² APNSHS Poverty Survey, cited in: National Conference on Household Living Conditions Measures, Instat and WB, 2001.

²³ This and the following paragraph are based on extracts from the GPRS, which drew its data on poverty from (a) Qualitative Assessment of Poverty in 10 Areas of Albania by the World Bank (WB) and CESS in 2001, and (b) the joint Instat / WB study mentioned above. The latter study relied on data from (c) the 2000 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) by Instat in 2000, and (d) the LCS mentioned in footnote 21.

Food Security,²⁴ along with good health, sanitation, childcare and feeding practices is an important determinant of nutritional levels. Expenditure on food absorbed 49.2% of urban households' budgets in 2000 compared to 67.7% in 1993.²⁵ A mission of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Program (WFP) to Albania in 1999 discovered that food difficulties were a result of the general economic situation rather than the refugee crisis at the time. The area cultivated and the timing of planting affect the total supply of food, and are influenced by the timing and amount of rainfall, other disruptions such as pests and diseases, taxes on fertilizers and pesticides, and the profitability of crops. Before 1990 about 70% of arable land was irrigated, permitting multiple crops per year, but about half of this irrigation and drainage infrastructure was damaged during the transition. Drugs and vaccines for livestock are restricted to those who can afford them, except for some treatments provided by the Government. While some northern communities are dependent upon Government food aid in the winter, most farmers survive with small-scale subsistence agriculture. Some families earn cash by selling livestock, fruit, and vegetables, but cereals are the main crops. About half of the agriculture products consumed in Albania are imported by the private sector mainly to meet the needs of urban areas, especially cereals, oilseeds and sugar. Prices and trade are liberalized. Some poor households, especially the poorest in the north, spend about three quarters of their income on food and cannot afford a varied and healthy diet. Their lack of food security results from low incomes, not from a supply shortage. Other potential threats to food security are earthquakes, tidal waves along the southwestern coast, snow storms, deforestation, and soil erosion.

main cities in Albania, where they lack infrastructure and some basic social services. Youth in some of these settlements lack access to education.

A survey carried out by Instat in 1998²⁶ found that about 44% of Albanians, 63% of those over the age of 15, were economically active. Disaggregated by gender, 53% of women and 73% of males over 15 were economically active. The total and portion varies by age groups; the 15-29 year-old group was the least and those aged 40-49 were the most economically active. Instat's calculation of a coefficient of economic dependency using this data reveals that each worker supports a non-working person over the age of 15. A comprehensive and reliable Labor Force Survey has yet to be carried out in Albania.

See Table 6 Incidence and Depth of Poverty by Urban and Rural, Table 7 Poverty by Prefectures, Table 8 Poverty as Measured by UBN by Prefecture, Table 9 Unmet Basic Needs (UBN) by Urban/Rural, Table 10 Household Poverty Rates, Table 11 Economic Conditions Over Time by Main Source of Income, Table 13 Employment and Unemployment Data, Table 14 Employment and Unemployment by Sex and Age, 1998, and Table 15 Composition

of Major Sources of Income by Poor/Non-Poor.

Vulnerable groups²⁷ provide a useful perspective since many are linked to poverty. See Table 12 Main Locations of Certain Vulnerable Groups in Albania, and for other important vulnerable groups see the sections on Women's Empowerment, Minority Discrimination, and Disadvantaged Children. Many people who are not considered poor remain vulnerable to becoming poor since their incomes are unstable and low, for instance small family enterprises have a high rate of bankruptcy. Real wages decreased drastically early in the transition (falling over 50% from 1991-1996²⁸) and the Minimum Wage has been indexed to inflation since 1992. Private sector wages are typically three times those of the public sector.²⁹ Household incomes in areas with fewer than 10,000 residents are one third less than in areas with more than 10,000 residents,³⁰ although many rural households subsist on non-financial income in the form of home-grown agricultural or livestock production.

The World Bank has offered Albania three loans referred to as Poverty Reduction Strategy Credits (PRSC), to be granted from 2002-2004 upon the achievement of certain conditions. Conditions for the first PRSC included, among

²⁴ A situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (FAO). Data in this box is from Special Report: FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission to Albania. 1999.

²⁵ Social Indicators Yearbook, Instat, December 2000.

²⁶ Results of Household Living Conditions Survey (LCS) October 1998, Instat, July 2001.

²⁷ A group of people with common characteristics who lack or risk losing some form of security.

²⁸ Albania in Figures, Instat, 2000.

²⁹ Estimate found in the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), Instat, 2000.

³⁰ Results of Household Living Conditions Survey (LCS) October 1998, Instat, July 2001.

others, increasing spending on health and education as a portion of GDP, preparing a health master plan for Tirana, and increasing the minimum contribution to social insurance.³¹

3.1.3 ANALYSIS

Poverty and hidden unemployment was present under the previous regime, and was exacerbated by political and regional instability along with the challenges of transition to a market economy. Economic reforms such as privatization and price liberalization have left many people and organizations redundant or uncompetitive and unable to find opportunities, and high inflation and falling national income contributed to income poverty. The end of isolation exposed people to foreign culture and imports, also leading to increased perceptions of relative poverty. Rural areas especially bear a legacy of underdevelopment, and some national infrastructure was damaged in the crises of 1992 and 1997-98. The 'middle-class' in Albania is still quite small and the level of corporate social responsibility is low.

General means of improving the rural situation include

- Improved market power through cooperatives and associations
- Marketing capacities
- Information
- Increased efficiency through increasing the size of farms will require a functioning land market and the enforcement of property rights
- Cost effective techniques/mechanization
- Innovative ways of dealing with local circumstances and natural resources
- Reduced transportation costs by improving infrastructure
- Rural credit

Low incomes from employment leave many workers in poverty, or very close to poverty since many cannot count on long-term jobs. Economic assistance, unemployment insurance and pensions from the Government are very low and shrinking while contributions are increasing. The Government lacks the resources to fulfill existing policy commitments to the poor. Overall the social protection

scheme has a low impact on poverty alleviation and neither prevents social exclusion nor allows for social reintegration, since the needs of particular vulnerable groups are rarely taken into consideration. For instance many youth who receive institutionalized care lack the support network and preparation needed when they leave to perform productive work and develop relationships. Urban unemployment tends to be higher in cities that were industrial centers under the previous regime, such as Kukes, Dibra, Elbasan, and Korca.

ASPECTS OF POVERTY IN REMOTE AREAS:

(This paragraph describes mountainous areas in particular, and applies to a lesser extent to hilly areas and flat coastal areas). The climate is harsher and arable land is scarcer and more fragmented. Almost a third of rural families have less than 0.5 hectares of arable land each. Households are isolated from markets, social activities, and basic services like sewage and drinkable water. They lack adequate transportation infrastructure. These factors result in malnutrition and high mortality and vulnerability to infections and diseases. Women especially are vulnerable to diseases and malnutrition.

BACKGROUND TO RURAL POVERTY: There has been a revolution in the agriculture sector since political and economic reforms began in late 1991. Albania went from 600 co-operatives and 110 agricultural enterprises to about

Since about 53% of Albanians live in rural areas and agriculture still accounts for over 50% of GDP, measures to address rural areas and the agriculture sector are tremendously important for Albania's development. Such intervention becomes even more critical considering that the majority of Albania's poor live in rural areas, and that rural women and girls are often among Albania's most vulnerable citizens.

450,000 private farms,³² but productivity per hectare is low. Agricultural production and rural living standards have fallen substantially, fuelled by unemployment and the absence of an adequate social system. Temporary coping mechanisms such as migrating for work help to raise the income of families but can also make the situation more difficult for the family members left behind on farms, and further

³¹ Conditions to be Met, 2002, UNICEF. <http://www.unicef.org/albania/prsc.htm>

³² Statistical Information in Albania, 2001, Instat & Bank of Albania.

weakens village social structures. Low levels of education and inadequate health care in rural areas prevent many from escaping the cycle of poverty.

The policy background to the transition in the agricultural sector includes the 1992 IMF agreement 'Stability and Restructuring Macro Economic Program'; an "Agricultural Strategy for Albania" covering the years 1992-1996 prepared by Albanian experts, the World Bank and the European Community, accompanied by an action plan for the transition to free markets; and the "Green strategy" for the period 1998-2002. The Agricultural Strategy focused on the privatization first of agricultural cooperatives and later of state farms; promoting free markets by measures including the liberalization of prices, first vegetables and later dairy products and meat; employing people in the improvement of rural infrastructure; bringing inflation under control; increasing the agricultural sector's access to credit; pooling resources in private farmers associations; building the effectiveness and transparency of the land market; and offering farmers more information on new developments and services. The Green strategy focused on the development of the agricultural sector, including the elimination of state subsidies for the agriculture sector and a withdrawal of the state to the role of agriculture policy and promotion. Privatization of the sector is complete but not the registration of land. Initiatives are underway to foster a market for land in rural areas.

Opportunities to establish commercial scale ventures are limited to the wealthy. In general the rural population has little opportunity to move from multi-function near-subsistence systems to commercially oriented enterprises, due to the lack of capital.³³

RURAL CREDIT: Microfinance is often held up as a solution to such problems around the world, and a few institutions are exploring the potential of rural micro-credit initiatives and family based micro-enterprises to make rural areas of Albania more sustainable. See Table 16 Major Institutions Offering Rural Micro-Credit. It is worth examining whether an expansion or a revision of these activities is desirable.

Microfinance programs tend to have as their objective either financial sustainability, poverty alleviation, women's empowerment, or a combination of the three. A trend is to place the emphasis on financial sustainability, but the cost-efficiency measures involved can undermine other goals.

In contrast to the optimism of many proponents of microfinance, econometric methods are unable to demonstrate microfinance to be automatically empowering for women when controlling for other variables. Sobering research suggests that the expansion of microfinance programs cannot be assumed to be empowering unless accompanied by direct and explicit measures to address women's empowerment.³⁴

Aside from the general deterrents to investment/lending in Albania such as political risk, credit institutions face the following challenges in rural areas:

- The size of the demand for credit
- Banks lack rural infrastructure
- Perceptions that micro-credit is risky (Banks prefer clients with collateral, which small farms often lack)
- The small loans which are usually appropriate in rural areas are expensive for banks to manage.

Farmers and rural communities are reluctant to engage in cooperation, which helps to make micro-credit less expensive and more effective. Decades of involuntary cooperation have caused a backlash against cooperation; most farmers now own the land they work, and there is hesitance due to uncertainty over the advantages of cooperation. Conventional financial institutions have been unable or unwilling to meet the credit needs of rural families, farms and businesses.

3.1.4 "EQUITY WITH GROWTH"

How can Albania meet the Millennium Development Goal of halving poverty by 2015? Albania's high inequality means that rapid economic growth alone is unlikely to significantly improve the situation of the poor; high growth

³³ Special Report: FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission to Albania. 1999.

³⁴ Micro-Finance and the Empowerment of Women: A Review of Key Issues, Linda Mayoux - ILO, 2000. <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/finance/papers/mayoux.htm>

rates do not guarantee poverty reduction.³⁵ Both greater equity and sustainable growth are required. Indeed in countries where inequality is high, reducing inequality can have an even greater impact on the poor than economic growth. Greater equality and growth do not necessarily conflict, and they could even reinforce each other if policies appropriate for the Albanian situation were applied. Poverty reduction works best when the poor are made more productive so they can contribute to economic growth themselves. How can the poor be made more productive, leading to economic growth and a reduction in both absolute and relative poverty?

Resources need to be directed disproportionately towards:³⁶

■ THE FACTORS OF PRODUCTION CONTROLLED BY THE POOR

- Their own labor – often this is all they have, so pro-poor growth should be labor intensive. Improved skills can be helpful, but ensuring basic labor productivity, reducing the risk of disability, and increasing the number of working years in a lifetime are priorities and require broad access to quality basic health services and education.

- Land, especially farmland. Expand legal and practical access to land, enforce property rights and establish a functioning land market so farms can reach more efficient shapes and sizes.

■ THE SECTORS WHERE THE POOR WORK

- Focus on improving agricultural productivity/output through the more widespread use of appropriate technology and farming practices and on increasing farm income by encouraging higher prices. Examples are breeding the best meat and milk-producing herds, subsidizing vaccinations, reducing storage loss, etc. Marketing Albanian produce will require better product information and quality controls.
- Then begin to promote low-skilled industrial employment and encourage manufactured and natural resource based exports.

■ THE AREAS WHERE THE POOR LIVE

- Invest in infrastructure especially in rural underdeveloped areas.

3.1.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

UN Poverty Strategy 2000 Action Priorities

- Promoting Rights and Responsibilities and Empowering the Poor to Bring About Change
- Undertaking Poverty and Vulnerability Assessments, Mapping, Planning and Evaluation
- Strengthening the Basic Capabilities of Poor People to ensure Basic Social Services for All
- Strengthening the Asset Base and Livelihood Opportunities of Poor People
- Promoting Macroeconomic and Social Policies that are Pro-Poor and Pro-equity

- The goals of Macroeconomic stability and economic growth should be supplemented with policies for the substantial distribution and redistribution of income, assets, and access to resources. Pro-poor policies are needed both in areas of Government expenditure and revenue collection. Policy-makers should be careful not to disadvantage women and minorities through macroeconomic and sectoral policies.
- Since equity issues affect development, peace and security, the UN should encourage the Government to take a multi-dimensional approach to poverty by publishing disaggregated data and analysis based on gender, age, ethnicity, region, and urban/rural differences. To be useful these surveys must be presented to policy makers in a timely way and should ideally be carried out in partnership with the Government. A rights-based approach to development is an important contribution of the UN system.
- To fight poverty and promote sustainable development, aid relationships require flexibility and sensitivity to the unique political, economic, social, cultural, ecological, and gender equality circumstances facing people living in poverty in each country. Any conditions attached to aid should be negotiated between Albania and the donor according to common values and concern for socially excluded groups.³⁷

³⁵ Global Poverty Report 1998: Overcoming Human Poverty, UNDP.

³⁶ Economic Policies and Poverty Reduction, 2001, UNDP. <http://www.undg.org>

³⁷ Reality of Aid 2002.

Global Trends in Foreign Aid

Meeting the Millennium Development Goals, such as eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, requires serious commitment from the Albanian Government and Civil Society, but also from foreign donors.

- Total aid has fallen (among donors from the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD)
 - Total DAC aid in 2000 (56.2 billion USD) was 12% lower than the peak in 1992 (63.7 billion USD) in real terms.
- Aid as a percentage of the national income and government budgets of donor countries has fallen
 - The unweighted average of aid from all DAC donors as a percentage of GNP went from 0.37% in 1980 to 0.22% in 2000. Only Denmark, Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, and Luxembourg meet the target of 0.7% set by the UN in 1970.
 - Aid as a percentage of donor central government spending has fallen from 0.82% in 1990 to 0.58% in 2000.
- The portion of multilateral Aid transferred through the UN relative to the IMF and World Bank is falling.
- The practice of attaching conditions to aid and loans grew in the 1990s
- Since the 1960s the percentage of aid given multilaterally has grown from 13% to 33%.
 - In 1999 67% of aid was bilateral, 9% came from the EC, and 24% from other multilateral sources (UN, WB, etcetera)
- Every donor except Denmark spends at least twice as much on the military as they spend on aid.
 - The UK spends 8 times as much, France 9, Italy 15, Greece 23, and the USA 33 times as much.
- 3.5% of bilateral aid in 2000 went to basic health and basic education
- 8% of aid from DAC donors in 2000 was spent in Europe

Source: Reality of Aid 2002

- The UN should promote the development of those sectors that directly improve living standards such as health, education, and infrastructure.
- The UN should promote public expenditure priorities that contribute to long-term human development, such as access to land, credit, food security, basic services, and other opportunities.
- The National Employment Service (NES) will need further assistance with capacity building and professional development. There is an immense need for job matching and skill training programs, and the demand for NES services will continue to rise as the quality of those services rises.
- The UN in Albania and the rest of the international community could help raise the prestige of the NES by registering their own job vacancies with the service.
- The UN or its partners could provide technical assistance to Instat to carry a much needed comprehensive Labor Force Survey, which would permit a better understanding of employment and income variations in Albania and would permit the better targeting of poverty reduction and employment generation strategies.
- The UN Country Team should play an important role in coordinating its activity closely with the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and the Government.
- Periodic updates of this Common Country Assessment and the National Millennium Development Goals Report should be timed to provide input at key stages of Government policy-making and revisions of the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy. The UN Development Assistance Framework and reviews should support those national strategies.
- The UN together with the Government should set milestones for reaching the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, such as targets at 5-year intervals. By placing the GPRS in a longer-term context, the coherence of the national planning process can be improved.
- The UN should promote forums for members of Government in countries of the region to

share lessons learned and best practices for poverty reduction.

- Promote land access and tenure by supporting the professional enforcement of legal guarantees against the forced eviction or harassment of the poor.
- Support investment in low cost technologies that can assist communities to improve and conserve natural resources.
- Support the extension of microfinance opportunities to rural and poor communities, as part of the restructuring of the credit system in Albania.
- Advocate against the imposition of user fees in poor communities for basic social services.
- Encourage Government leaders to publicly commit to the provision of basic social services to the poor as a priority.
- Advocate the principle that basic social services should be partly designed and managed at the community level, and seek to integrate this principle into the decentralization strategy.
- Social Businesses³⁸ run by and for vulnerable groups can complement the system of social protection and in some instances can allow socially excluded individuals to become more active and productive citizens. The number of individuals directly affected may be low but indirectly the image of the vulnerable groups and stakeholder participants may improve. Although the initial investment may be costly, social businesses can save society money in the long run and they offer a sustainable alternative to passive assistance. The private sector and the Government in Albania have already expressed commitment to the social business model and it is part of the GPRS. Youth Albanian Parcel Service (YAPS) is the first in Albania. Founded in August 2001, it employs 32 young orphans and disabled people and reached its breakeven point in March 2002.³⁹
- Expand the provision of emergency support to vulnerable groups, such as food aid in the North, in cooperation with other partners and the Government.
- The UN should support programs involving Public Administration and Civil Service that

improve transparency, accountability, respect for human rights, and broad participation.

- Promote awareness of international human rights and labor standards among the business community in Albania.
- Donor procurement policies should give priority to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Albania.
- Promote the work, development and participation of civil society organizations active in poor communities, in order to improve the social, political and economic bargaining power of poor men and women.

3.2 Migration

3.2.1 DEFINITION

There are a few key conceptual differences to be made between overlapping categories of population movement. Migration may be:

- a) external (emigration) or internal (such as economic migration, the avoidance of blood feuds, and urbanization - the movement from rural areas to more populated centers);
- b) legal (following official VISA or asylum procedures, etc.) or illegal (smuggling or trafficking of women and children);
- c) voluntary (an informed, non-coerced decision) or involuntary (seeking asylum or being trafficked);
- d) temporary (such as migrant workers) or permanent (may lead to "brain-drain" – the loss of highly productive and skilled individuals), and
- e) migrants may originate in Albania or may be in transit from another country. Trafficking & Smuggling of People and Asylum System are discussed under section 7 Personal Security.

3.2.2 ASSESSMENT

There is a high rate of both internal and external migration in Albania. The most common form of internal migration in Albania is urbanization. The urban population has risen from 31.8% in 1970 to 42.0% in 2000.⁴⁰ External migration is largely temporary involving migrant workers, and a large but slowly falling portion are illegal. Urbanization and emigration show no signs of slowing. The most common internal destinations are Tirana and Durrës, while the

³⁸ Profits are reinvested to meet social goals, such as increasing employment opportunities for disadvantaged persons. See Social Business, ICS, 2001. http://www.unicef.org/albania/what_we_do/rulihoxa.pdf

³⁹ See http://www.unicef.org/albania/what_we_do/yaps.htm and an article in Financial Times, 13 April 2002, <http://globalarchive.ft.com/globalarchive/article.html?id=020413001735>

⁴⁰ Preliminary Results of the Population and Housing Census 2001, INSTAT

most common external destinations are Italy and Greece. Migrants are more likely to be male than female. Many migrants, such as refugees, asylum seekers, and trafficked persons pass through Albania in transit from other countries such as Turkey or China. The migration of unaccompanied children through friends and family abroad is sometimes comparable to trafficking where there is involvement in criminal gangs, prostitution, and dealing drugs. Relations between Albanian and diaspora communities are weak in comparison to other cultures, and Albanian migrants abroad have a poor image and face stigmatization.

Statistics are very poor, partly due to the irregular nature of much of the migration, but most rough estimates of migration suggest that at least 15%⁴¹ of the population of Albania lives abroad at any given point in time. Many migrants send home money earned abroad (remittances), usually in the form of cash, an important source of income for families that can make the difference between poverty and non-poverty. Statistics on remittances are also poor because of their informality, but IMF estimates of remittances have increased from 150 million USD in 1992 to 568 million in 2001, in the conservative range of 15-20% of Albania's GDP. Emigration can be positive when it permits temporary migrants to acquire skills and work experience, exposes migrants to other cultures and networks, and permits a household to survive.

High rates of migration are considered a problem in Albania because of:⁴²

- a) The impact on the sending community (brain drain; increased burden and isolation of women who must do household chores, farm-work, and child-raising; abandoned farm land left unproductive and vulnerable to erosion);
- b) The impact on the destination host community (pressure on labor markets, infrastructure, health care, education, racism and xenophobia, and the extra burden on social systems, especially in the case of internal migration);
- c) The impact on the migrants themselves (difficulty integrating into the host community and labor market and difficulty accessing sufficient Government services⁴³ and infrastructure can lead to higher rates of unemployment, criminality and involvement in

the informal economy, child labor, and low quality or the absence of health care and education opportunities; and the journey abroad can be costly and dangerous in the case of illegal emigration). Youth, especially those from rural areas, are vulnerable because their low level of sexual education puts them at risk of HIV and other STIs, and their low level of knowledge of foreign languages puts them at greater risk of being unable to negotiate their way out of an abusive situation.

3.2.3 ANALYSIS

The greater freedom to choose place of residence and work that Albanians gained in the early 1990s permitted rapid growth of the main cities and shrinkage of the overall population as can be observed in Albania today. The immediate reason for migration is the desire or need to take advantage of the availability of relatively better opportunities elsewhere. Particular reasons for migration range from migration as a means of coping with poverty to migration as a means of entering children into a better quality education system, with similar reasons for internal and external migration.

The general shortage of economic opportunities, and the lack of adequate education, health and security, especially in rural areas of Albania push many individuals and households to migrate. The low level of empowerment of rural women and communities can leave them without alternatives to migration. Rural areas are more likely to have unqualified teachers, and it is estimated that half of the primary health care facilities in rural areas have remained non-functioning since 1997. In some cases internal migration is motivated by emergency survival needs and can be considered humanitarian displacement.

The following cases exemplify typical reasons for internal migration: A Northern household may abandon its farm, unsustainable because of its small size, outdated techniques and unfavorable climate, and move into an informal settlement near a city (called "peri-urban", where poverty is sometimes more severe than in remote areas). A struggling household may send a child to work in a city or may send an adult or an unaccompanied child or youth abroad to find employment and send home

⁴¹ Direct communication with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, 2001.

⁴² Causes and consequences of Albanian emigration during transition, EBRD, 1999.

⁴³ The Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS), WB and MoF, 2001.

income. In the case of emigration, a middle class family may emigrate to give their child access to a higher quality education. A professional may emigrate because of his or her sense of relative deprivation and perception of greater pay, job security, and employment opportunities abroad. A student or professional studying or training abroad may lack motivation to return to Albania and so may choose to continue living abroad. Many young people see no hope for their future in Albania and consider migration to be their only opportunity for personal growth.

Overall, poor basic services, inadequate employment opportunities, high criminality and blood feuds are common contributing factors. A considerable number of Albanians are recognized as refugees in other countries, which is indicative of a lack of security and the perception of threats to human rights in Albania. Refugee flows from Albania have tended to correspond to internal crises such as the 1997 collapse of public order.

Overall there has been a lack of institutional response from either Civil Society or Government. There is an absence of migration management initiatives from Civil Society, both at the central level in terms of research and lobbying and at the local level in terms of addressing the immediate concerns and needs of migrants. While the legal framework does have some modern components, as a whole it needs to be completed and reordered. Decentralization of responsibilities and fiscal authority to local communities may enable them to generate needed income and deliver better services.

A common misperception is to view migration as the result of a dysfunctional macro-economic situation and to assume that migration would disappear when the economy improves. It is important to take into consideration the impact that migration itself has on development; for instance income from remittances drives much of Albania's current economic growth. However, this income needs to be moved into the banking sector and directed towards productive investment rather than imports. Emigrants should be encouraged to return and transfer human capital and technology to Albania and improve the capacity of the State sector.

Strong connections between diaspora and immigrant communities and their country of origin, involving culture, education, voting, and language, can help to encourage and make possible the return of emigrants, possibly reducing the brain drain. The Ministry of Foreign

Affairs has an Institute for Diaspora but its level of activity is low and its concentration on Albanian historic minorities excludes most Albanian immigrants abroad.

Regional cooperation and regional development initiatives such as the Stability Pact should be part of a broad strategy to both reduce the pressure for migration and to improve the benefits that source and destination countries derive from migrants. Law enforcement is only one way to reduce migration, and it can only work when there is equal emphasis on strong domestic development, increasing respect for human rights, improving perceptions of personal security, and the creation of legal opportunities for migration.

3.2.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

- The lack of reliable data on migration needs to be addressed through new studies but this should not delay immediate measures to mitigate the problems caused by high rates of migration. Target groups are women, children, youth, and businesspeople, keeping in mind rural/peri-urban/urban differences and service imbalances.
- The UN and its partners including IOM could carry out comprehensive quantitative and qualitative studies on remittances as an engine for economic growth, motivations and propensities to migrate, and the impact of migrants on host communities.
- The UN could draw attention to the plight of inhabitants of the growing peri-urban settlements and work towards the alleviation of their situation by encouraging and supporting the coordination and harmonization of Government policies, services and infrastructure to make them more responsive to shifting demographics.
- In the long term, improved infrastructure, Government services, and economic opportunities are necessary in rural areas to discourage further migration. The UN could support rural humanitarian, empowerment, income-generation, and community strengthening efforts to work towards this goal.
- Urgent activities can be undertaken to address critical needs such as access to health care and education institutions in some of the worst-off rural and peri-urban areas, which the UN can help to identify, promote,

and fund with its partners.

- The UN and its partners can continue to help promote respect for and enjoyment of human rights, including effective and impartial juridical remedy.
- A stronger education system with certification recognized abroad would lessen the motivation of families to emigrate for the sake of their children. The UN could support the Government in the development and implementation of its education strategy and encourage foreign institutions to grant accreditation.
- Students who study abroad need incentives to return, and professionals can be encouraged to return or remain through incentives such as greater pay, guaranteed

job security, and upward mobility. The UN could encourage the development and implementation of such incentives or fund pilot projects.

- The UN and its partners can help to reduce rates of illegal emigration by raising awareness of the ways and benefits of migrating legally, and by providing technical assistance to improve the capacity of the Government to negotiate and advocate the eventual reduction and elimination of legal barriers to Albanian emigrants. This would facilitate the integration of migrants into host communities, reduce the danger associated with illegal emigration, and offer migrants more alternatives to entering the informal and criminal economy.

4 Equality of Opportunity Security

Millennium Development Goal

- **Promote gender equality and empower women**
 - Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and to all levels of education no later than 2015

Relevant Human Rights Documents

- **The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**
- **The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination**
- **The International Convention on the Rights of the Child**

The 1998 Constitution states that all are equal before the law and no one may be discriminated for reasons such as gender, race, religion, ethnicity, language, political, religious or philosophical beliefs, economic condition, education or social position or because of who his parents are. Since certain vulnerable groups in Albania continue to be systematically deprived of basic opportunities and human rights, this entire section is devoted to the human security concerns of minorities, women, and children.

4.1 Women's Empowerment

4.1.1 ASSESSMENT

The 2001 UNDP Gender-Related Development Index⁴⁵ (GDI) ranked Albania 74th out of 146 countries, the lowest in Eastern Europe. Albanian Women tend to have a low level of

Women Participation Status March 2002 ⁴⁴	Total	Females	%
Members of the parliament	140	8	5.7
Ministers	19	2	10.5
Vice Ministers	23	1	4.3
Director of Department/ General Directors	171	41	24.0
Civil Servants	1,368	617	45.1
Member of Supreme Council of Justice	14	1	7.1
Head of Constitutional and Supreme Court	2	0	0.0
Member of Supreme Court	11	5	45.4
Head of Court of Appeal	24	12	50.0
Head of First degree Court	26	3	11.5
Judges	158	103	65.2

participation in decision-making processes, and they are vulnerable to violence in the household. Rates of contraception use are low and rates of abortion are high. See the section on the Health Care System. Men may legally marry at age 18, compared to 16 for girls, but the average age at first marriage of both boys and girls is much higher, 29.3 and 23.5 respectively in 1999. See Table 25 Marriages, Divorces, Infant Homes and Adoptions. Life expectancy for women at birth in 1999 was 76.4 compared to 71.7 for men.⁴⁶ More educated women tend to use more modern contraceptives, have fewer children, and to marry and bear children at a later age.⁴⁷ Women often migrate, but not as frequently as males, and many women and children are at risk of trafficking and prostitution. Domestic violence appears to be increasing but few cases are brought to the court system.

From 2001-2002 there were 5 women Mayors, 1 woman Prefect, and 2 women Ministers. From 1994-2002 there were 189 women Notaries.⁴⁸ Women entered into Parliament in 1945 for the first time and reached 1/3 of the Parliament during the period 1974-1990. Today, the situation has changed. The 2001 Parliamentary

⁴⁴ Albanian Response to the Millennium Development Goals, HDPC, 2002.

⁴⁵ Based on gender equality in health, education and standard of living. <http://www.undp.org/hdr2001/>

⁴⁶ Women and Men in Albania, Instat, December 2001.

⁴⁷ Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices and Beliefs (KAPB) Survey, 2001. <http://www.unicef.org/albania/publications/kapb.pdf>

⁴⁸ Direct communication with the Notary Association in Albania, 2002.

elections were a disaster for women; few women managed to become candidates, even fewer were elected, and women are underrepresented in official electoral institutions. On a positive note, most parties included gender issues in their 2001 campaign. The OSCE Final Report on the 2001 Parliamentary elections observes that it is difficult for women to attain positions of political leadership even though some political parties guarantee women a portion of leadership positions and women are quite involved at the grassroots level. Women won 5.7% of seats in the 2001 Parliament, down from 7.1% in 1997.⁴⁹ See Table 18 Members of Parliament by Gender

Legal framework for gender equality

- The principle of equality was formally proclaimed in 1946
- Equality is guaranteed in the 1998 Constitution, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender. Includes equal rights to education & ownership of property.
- Albania is a signatory to many international conventions on human rights
- Civil Code (rights in legal proceedings)
- Penal Code (protection & punishment)
- Labor Code (right to work & equal pay)
- Family Code (right to marry & divorce, rights and duties regarding family & children)
- The law on social insurance grants women special rights related to childbearing

and Table 17 Elected Women in the Local Authorities.

Since the Albanian Parliamentary system is a mix of direct election and proportional representation, there were two lists of candidates in 2001. 7% of direct candidates (78 out of 1,114) and 15% of proportional candidates (120 out of 823) were women. The latter figure exaggerates the candidature of women since a smaller portion were high enough in the ranking submitted by parties to have a decent chance of being elected. As for electoral institutions, no woman was a full

member of the Central Electoral Commission, and out of areas visited by international observers, women made up 7% of Zone Election Commissions members and 8% of Voting Center Commissions members.⁵⁰ Interestingly, in May 2001 elections in 4 of 12 Prefectures for positions in the Youth Parliament, about 35,000 youth voted and about 60% of those elected were female.⁵¹

Most women were illiterate before the Second World War. Literacy and education improved greatly during the previous regime for both men and women, but the situation has deteriorated during the transition.⁵² While secondary school is obligatory for both men and women, and equal rights are guaranteed by the constitution, some inequalities still persist in education. For instance the overall majority of teachers are women but they continue to be underrepresented as teachers in higher education. Women held 63.2% of 28,293 teaching positions in basic education in 2000-2001, but only 38.7% of about 1,700 lecturers in higher education, 5.8% of 222 university professors, and 30.2% of 288 assistant professors were women.⁵³ On the other hand, women are over-represented as students of higher education. Most directors of schools are male even though women make up the vast majority of employees in the education sector. See Table 20 Level 0-5 – Female Percentage of Students and Table 21 Number of Female University Graduates and Teachers.

The Labor Code stipulates equal pay for work of equal value, but wage discrimination in Albania means that according to one source women's salaries tend to be 80-85% of men's salaries.⁵⁴ Women tend not to be paid for overtime work and the unemployment rate of women is higher than for men and rose during the transition. Women in prison have poor hygiene conditions and in practice do not have access to nursery for young children or to conjugal visits.

Initiatives to improve the situation and power of women include the activity of many Women's NGOs and the creation of the Parliamentary Sub-Commission on Youth and Women in 1997 and the Department of Women and Family within

⁴⁹ Final report, OSCE, 2001.

⁵⁰ Ibid

⁵¹ Youth Parliament launches elections throughout Albania, UNICEF, 2001. An additional 2 Prefectures held Youth Parliament elections in 2000.

⁵² Women 2000: Albania, International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights. <http://www.ihf-hr.org/reports/women/albania.pdf>

⁵³ Albanian Response to the Millennium Development Goals, HDPC, 2002.

⁵⁴ Albanian National Women Report 1999, UNDP. <http://www.undp.org.al/publications.htm>. The original source or validity of this statistic is not specified.

the Ministry of Labor in 1994. This department was upgraded into a State Committee for Women and Family (SCWF) with a decree from the Council of Ministers in 1998 and in 2001 the Council of Ministers changed the name of this Committee into the State Committee for Equal Opportunities (SCEO). The main mandate of the Committee is to formulate and implement policies and coordinate non-state efforts for the promotion of gender equality. This Committee is creating official Albanian translations of human rights conventions but it lacks capacity to deal with complex problems in this field. It prepared the 1999-2000 Platform of the Albanian Government for Women, but social issues, especially gender issues, have yet to receive much attention and commitment from the Government. The National Plan of Action for Advancement of Women and Gender Equality calls for gender issues to be systematically considered in Government initiatives, to be ensured by the State Committee for Equal Opportunities.

4.1.2 ANALYSIS

The double burden of women as workers and mothers/caretakers is an old socialist mentality that still lingers in Albania. Besides performing household chores such as gathering water and fuel

The real exercise of women's political rights is closely linked with the exercise of their economic and social rights

Source: Albanian National Women Report

and washing and cleaning, rural women also participate alongside men in agriculture. Farm work is difficult due to relatively little use of fertilizers and mechanization. During the previous regime women had forced equality in terms of education and employment and were reserved one third of Government positions except for high-level political positions. Currently, in the absence of this façade of equality, political representation and inequality have worsened for women as restrictive and old harmful traditions have gained renewed strength, especially in some rural areas where the customary code known as the Kanun has revived. Mentalities and traditions are at the root of gender equality and tend to be more conservative in rural areas.

Stronger enforcement and promotion of the equal rights and legal status of women is needed. The

legal framework is praiseworthy for the equal status it concedes to women, but it does not take into account gender roles as determined by tradition and overall it does not take the progressive step of measures to resolve systematic discrimination resulting from past marginalization.

For instance while there is no discriminatory law regarding credit for women, it is still difficult in practice to obtain in some rural areas where traditional values are strong and even banks in urban areas are hesitant to lend to women. The National Women Report argues that the adversarial nature of Albanian politics deters some women from entering politics.

Unsafe abortions continue to occur; many women lack information on reproductive health services and issues and many lack the power within their relationships to implement safe family planning methods even though they are legal.

Women (especially elderly women) are often economically dependent on others, especially males, since women are often unemployed, are often uncovered by social security during their working age, usually outlive their husbands, and often perform unpaid work in the home. Women can legally inherit land but traditionally it is the son who inherits. The privatization process greatly benefited males over females, since males are usually the family representatives for property administration. On the other hand, women head 80% of single-parent households, and courts grant women child custody in 4 out of 5 cases.⁵⁵ Court decisions for men to pay alimony in divorce cases are difficult to enforce. Often a woman will move into the existing home of the husband, in which cases judges usually grant the man all property rights to the home in case of divorce. Property acquired during a marriage is considered common property, but most divorced couples cannot afford to take a loss from selling the property, so they are often obliged to continue living together, which increases the risk of domestic violence.

Just as women are assigned different roles within the family, women tend to be assigned different roles in the workplace. The State Committee on Women and Family stated in 1997 that most employed women worked in agriculture (70%) and the public sector (20%); both of these sectors have very low wages and prestige. Only 10% held positions in the private sector.⁵⁶ These traditional roles combine with discriminatory attitudes to limit the opportunities of women to improve their level of well-being and participate in decision-making.

⁵⁵ Albanian National Women Report 1999, UNDP.

⁵⁶ Women of the World: Laws and Policies Affecting Their Reproductive Lives: East Central Europe. 2000. Albanian Family Planning Association. www.crlp.org/pub_bo_wowece.html

A woman with the same level of education as a man would tend to have much more difficulty entering a high level public or private position, and women tend to follow stereotypical career paths.

Low involvement in decision-making appears to be related to both traditional roles and the involvement of women in other domains. As in many societies, it is women who tend to compensate for the lack of public support to the sick, the elderly, and children. In addition women tend to perform a large portion of household chores and farm duties, especially when male members of the household emigrate to look for jobs shifting the burden and responsibility to women, who have to work harder and longer at home. Women lack the spare time and power to compete with men in hierarchy, since they are too involved in unpaid and unregistered work at home. The stigma of divorce has fallen during the transition. Some women are abandoned when male household members migrate, and strict emigration procedures often make it difficult for families to reunite abroad.

The tradition of male dominance within the family has revived and this places women at risk of abuse and limits the power of women to control

Security is a concern in some areas, especially for school-aged girls who cannot attend school because they fear kidnapping. The most vulnerable groups are single female heads of households with children, women abandoned by their husband, women who are abused within the family, and women who become prostitutes (often through deception or the abuse of marriage traditions).

their reproductive lives through use of contraceptive methods. Domestic violence is not considered a public issue and it is not specifically mentioned in the Penal Code. Police tend not to interfere and legal proceedings begin only when the victim herself makes a complaint and prepares the case. Sexual abuse in the workplace is forbidden in Labor Code but not the Penal Code.

The different NGOs supporting the prevention of violence against women and the healing of victims lack sufficient training and cooperation. Police, prosecutors, and health staff including doctors, nurses and midwives do not keep statistics on domestic abuse. Economic

dependence is the main reason why women stay in abusive relationships, and women employed outside the home are less likely to experience abuse.

4.1.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Gender equality must be considered not as an isolated issue but as a cross-cutting theme to be “mainstreamed” (integrated) into many types of UN, Government and other initiatives, at all phases including assessment, design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.⁵⁷
- Gender mainstreaming can only succeed when implemented alongside a strategy to provide an equal opportunity environment for men and women.
- A gender analysis of Albania’s Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy could contribute to policy dialogue on gender equality.
- The lack of equal opportunities between women and men must be systematically addressed in these areas: the lack of access to information by women; the lack of law enforcement and security; the lack of alternatives to relieve women of work in the home; the lack of infrastructure for leisure; the lack of training programs; the lack of job opportunities for women; and the lack of attitudes which encourage and permit women equal opportunity in decision-making and discourage abuse.
- The promotion and integration of women into public and private life with the same opportunities as men to improve their well-being and engage in decision-making, without gender discrimination, should be high on the agenda of Government priorities.
- Promotion of equality concepts through media and other means of communication.
- The contribution and advocacy role of women’s NGOs in Albania should be recognized and promoted, along with other women’s associations and associations that can involve many women such as Parent Teachers Associations (PTAs).
- Health care, law enforcement and social workers need to be sensitized on the importance of violence against women, trained to detect signs of abuse, prepared to provide or refer women to necessary services, and organized to work together. Women need to know what services (such as shelters) and legal alterna-

⁵⁷ See Gender Mainstreaming Strategy, UNDP Albania, for examples of specific objectives & indicators.

tives they can access.⁵⁸

- Attitudes towards domestic violence and abused women can be changed in the long run through public debate and community campaigns targeting parents and educators. The Ministry of Education should play a role in training of teachers and developing school materials on this topic, and the University of Tirana should train future teachers to sensitize children to the problems of violence and ensure teachers are able to recognize abused children and provide necessary references.
- It is important to raise the awareness and skills of journalists who often further victimize abused women and reinforce stereotypes.
- End the delay in funding and staffing the already-existing mechanisms for promoting and protecting women and their rights.
- Civic and political education in schools for both boys and girls could strengthen the principle of equality. This includes Mainstreaming gender equality concepts into school curricula.
- Revise legislation to conform to international standards such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.⁵⁹

4.2 Minority Discrimination

4.2.1 DEFINITION

The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination defines racial discrimination as: any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.

4.2.2 ASSESSMENT

Information in this section is mostly qualitative

since empirical data on the situation of minorities is lacking in Albania. Unlike the 1989 Census, questions on ethnicity and religion were absent from the April 2001 Census. An important observation is that the various minority groups in Albania do not face uniform conditions. Most Roma⁶⁰ lead difficult lives under systemic discrimination whereas Montenegrin Serbs (concentrated in the north) and Vlachs (also known as Aromanians, concentrated in the south) tend to have a similar level of well being as Albanians. Macedonians (concentrated in Prespe in southeastern Albania) tend to be somewhat worse off. Greeks, who form the largest minority and are well-organized, tend to be better off than the typical Albanian.

While Greeks do have numerous complaints, relations between minorities and the general population in Albanian appear relatively good

In total there are at least 8 to 10 million Roma living around the world. About 0.5 million Roma were killed in the holocaust. Most Roma live on the European continent, forming Europe's largest minority, but most of these live in countries that are not yet part of the European Union. The Roma have neither a state nor a territorial affiliation. While family connections are strong among Roma, most Roma do not have a strong sense of being part of a larger cross-border nation or cultural community. International organizations claiming to represent Roma are emerging and there are already many community level Roma groups.

except in the case of Roma.⁶¹ The four main groups of Albanian Roma are Kallbuxhile, Mokcaret, Kartofet, and Cerqaret.⁶² Roma live in many Albanian cities and the outskirts of Tirana, and were roughly estimated to number 30,000 in 2000.⁶³ This minority faces conditions of disproportionate hardship contrary to legislative guarantees of equality. Relative to Albania as a whole, income, literacy, education levels, housing standards, access to clothing, access to food, and access to health care

⁵⁸ For more recommendations see: Mapping of Existing Information on Domestic Violence in Albania, 2000. <http://www.unicef.org/albania/publications/domviol.pdf>

⁵⁹ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>

⁶⁰ Roma are also known as Gypsies. Some consider themselves to be Evgjits as distinct from Roma. Evgjits claim Egyptian ancestry and are usually settled in urban areas and integrated with other Albanians.

⁶¹ Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2001: Albania, US State Department, March 2002. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2001/eur/8219pf.htm>

⁶² Report on the Completion of the Project "On the Status of the Minorities in the Republic of Albania". AHC. <http://www.ihf-hr.org/reports/0009albania.htm>

⁶³ Human Rights in the OSCE Region: Albania, IHF, 2001. <http://www.ihf-hr.org/reports/ar01/Country%20issues/Countries/Albania.pdf>

and other social services tend to be lower among Roma. Rates of unemployment, homelessness, dropping out of school, and police harassment as reported by human rights groups are higher for Roma.

A survey of 400 young people aged 9-17 discovered the following perceptions of discrimination: 57% feel that disabled children, 43% that children of other ethnic groups and 41% that children from poor families, are treated unfairly - especially children from Tirana City. 85% say there is fair treatment for children of other religions.⁶⁴

In Albania it is forbidden to create a political party on an ethnic, religious or regional basis, according to the 1991 law on political parties. No seats in Parliament are reserved for minorities but Parliament typically contains 5-10 minority representatives, mainly of the Greek minority,⁶⁵ and a larger number tend to be elected to local government authorities. The Government of Albania states that it intends to offer social services including health care and education to minorities just as they would to any other Albanian. The 1995 Law on the Education System recognizes the right of minorities to study and be taught in their mother tongue.

The 1998 Constitution of Albania along with other policies and laws provide for the equality of all citizens and prohibit discrimination in property holding or social protection on the basis of ethnicity. In accordance with articles 60-63, the independent People's Advocate (Ombudsman) was created in 1999 "to defend the rights, freedoms and lawful interests of individuals from unlawful or improper actions or failures to act of the organs of public administration" and make recommendations. The Department of Prefectures in the Ministry of Local Government contains a National Minorities Section that monitors the involvement of minorities in local and national decision-making. In 2000 the Office of National Minorities was created in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to monitor Albania's conformity with minority-related international commitments, such as the European Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

4.2.3 ANALYSIS

The situation of Vlachs, Macedonians, and Greeks in Albania is boosted by the access that some household members have to temporary emigration, facilitated by cultural connections with their country of origin.⁶⁶ Local political structures represent the Greek minority well. Albania has never had a school in the Montenegrin language, and the ability of Montenegrin Serbs to benefit from emigration has been limited by instability in Montenegro, although many have returned to live in Montenegro. Podgorians (Montenegrins of Muslim rather than Orthodox belief) integrated with Albanians long ago. There is no country that is highly receptive to Roma migrants, as shown by discrimination in many countries against Roma asylum seekers, and by the debate within the European Union over the free movement of labor.

ROMA: Most Roma were nomadic until the 1960s when they were concentrated and forced to work for State farms or garbage collection. Nowadays Roma community leaders tend to offer an optimistic picture of non-discrimination and positive relations with Albanians, but social and economic indicators paint a different picture. Together the problems of the Roma tend to reinforce each other and are exacerbated by, at best, neglect from society and government. As was the case with women most minorities were employed under the forced equality of the Communist regime, a situation that was unsustainable as stereotypes and discrimination regained their influence during the transition. Throughout the chaotic land and property privatization process, Roma have lacked the political power to influence the distribution and have been especially vulnerable to eviction.

The monetary amount of economic assistance provided by the Government to Roma is quite small, but it makes up a large portion of the income of those Roma who do manage to obtain it. Roma families tend to be large, averaging 5-6 births per family.⁶⁷ Many try to improve their economic situation through migration within Albania or through emigration. Others earn income through begging, a short-term solution that perpetuates discrimination, or subsist on the poor wages they receive from whatever temporary labor employment they can find. Casual workers tend not to be eligible for

⁶⁴ Young Voices, UNICEF, 2001.

⁶⁵ Legal Situation of the Roma in Europe, Council of Europe, March 2002. <http://stars.coe.fr/doc/doc02/EDOC9397.htm>

⁶⁶ Qualitative Assessment of Poverty in 10 districts of Albania, WB and CESS, 2001. <http://www.minfin.gov.al/initiatives/gprs/documents/qualitative/qa.html>. Greeks especially benefit from visas, residence and work permits, education and health care.

⁶⁷ Report on the Completion of the Project "On the Status of the Minorities in the Republic of Albania". AHC. <http://www.ihf-hr.org/reports/0009albania.htm>

economic assistance when they are unemployed. Some Roma also perceive that Roma are less likely to be hired than Albanians with the same qualifications, and that Roma risk recrimination if they support a particular political party during election campaigns.

Roma often share ambivalent feelings towards integration, preferring improved status, education and cooperation, concerned that complete integration would result in assimilation and the loss of the best aspects of their culture. This is sometimes used as an excuse to justify their segregation, making it controversial to determine the extent to which their segregation in some communities is a result of outside discrimination or their internal desire to preserve their culture. Such segregation is common, for instance this is the case with Roma in Korça and Shkodra. The quality of services, infrastructure, and housing appears to be poorer in areas inhabited mainly by Roma.

The widespread corruption generally recognized to be present in public institutions may also indirectly discriminate against those who do not have the necessary connections or means in order to have access to public services, basic facilities or employment.⁶⁸

The reason for segregation is much less ambiguous in classrooms where Roma children tend to receive little attention from teachers and are often kept apart from other children in the back of the class.⁶⁹ Low school attendance is also a symptom of the need for youth to support their families economically, their marginalization in the classroom, their fear of aggression and abuse from by other students, and the revival of a less sedentary lifestyle for some Roma when the transition ended their forced stability of residence. It is sometimes necessary for youth to emigrate to find work. Albania has never had a Roma-language school.

4.2.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

- The portion of minorities in the population is small but since some groups do face serious social, political, and economic discrimination, the attention of the United Nations is needed to support their human rights.
- The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) 2000 report on Albania observed that neither minorities nor the government consider minority discrimination to be a priority, therefore much advocacy and public awareness building on this issue are necessary.⁷⁰
- A study to analyze forms of indirect discrimination faced by minorities would deepen understanding and permit targeted interventions.
- Marginalized and neglected minorities should be aided with affirmative action.
- New attention and funding for Roma related projects must involve Roma directly as much as possible as planners, implementers, and beneficiaries, rather than becoming a business exploited by others with potentially less commitment or impact. An example of addressing this concern is to reach beyond English speakers and Internet users and bring funding announcements to the attention of local Roma community associations.
- Government, the UN and Civil Society should promote both tolerance and appreciation of ethnic differences in the areas of media, culture, youth and education, civil society and government, parliament and administration.⁷¹
- Recognizing the European pattern where discrimination tends to be stronger with local government, the Government should make sure that minorities are not disadvantaged by the ongoing process of decentralization.
- Reducing illiteracy among youth should be one of the highest priorities.
- The legal framework for equality relevant to minorities, including international legal instruments, needs to be better implemented.

⁶⁸ The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) Second Report on Albania, 16 June 2000 (<http://www.ecri.coe.int/en/08/01/01/CBC2%20Albania.pdf>)

⁶⁹ Qualitative Assessment of Poverty in 10 districts of Albania, WB and CESS, 2001. "<http://www.minfin.gov.al/initiatives/gprs/documents/qualitative/qa.html>" <http://www.minfin.gov.al/initiatives/gprs/documents/qualitative/qa.html>

⁷⁰ Ibid

⁷¹ Human Rights and National Minorities, Stability Pact - Working Table I, Oct 2001.

- A system of regularly monitoring, observing, and reporting on areas of potential minority discrimination should be established.

4.3 Disabled Children

4.3.1 ASSESSMENT

Children in Albania face risks from many directions. For instance hundreds of children are locked up inside of their home, where they cannot access education or develop like other children, since they could be killed by a feuding family if they were to leave their home. These blood feuds are part of the Kanun code of honor which has revived especially in the North, the poorer areas of Albania, and areas where Government control is weakest. Blood feuds and the isolation and self-confinement of families mainly affect boys and men but girls and women are also affected. Another example of a threat to children is exploitation by traffickers: see section 7.2 Trafficking & Smuggling of People. This section focuses on four other concerns: disabled children, institutionalized children, children in conflict with the law, and street children and child labor.

DISABLED CHILDREN: The current system of social assistance and social services in Albania is not able to offer proper services to the children and adolescents with physical and mental disabilities. There is a total of only 10 special schools for children with disability in all of Albania, with a total capacity of 650 pupils, whereas the Ministry of Education has recorded 12,000 children with disabilities in need of education. There are 2 Day Centres and 5 Residential Centres for the assessment and rehabilitation of children with physical and learning disabilities, which have a total capacity of 250 children, insufficient in comparison with total needs. Services at home and in the community are almost non-existent.⁷² Besides problems of integration into the education system, medical and other specialized services are also very limited, so the activity and interaction of disabled children is greatly confined to their own homes. For children with physical disabilities the environment outside of their home is almost inaccessible. Although there are various initiatives – especially among civil society – directed towards the rehabilitation and integration of disabled people and disabled children, there are

still a great number of disabled children who receive no treatment or support at all.

INSTITUTIONALIZED CHILDREN: In Albania today, the number of residential institutions (for abandoned children) remains the same as before the transition. In total, there are 10 state run residential institutions in Albania. Early in the transition the terrible conditions under which the children had been living in residential institutions became known to the public and the new government began to improve the conditions with support from the international community. However, the deep economic crisis and political turmoil has hampered the development of a new structure and institutional framework for residential institutions for children and the development of alternatives to residential care.

These institutions are situated in large towns all over Albania and they are structured according to the age of the children. Initially, an abandoned child is sent to one of five infant homes for children aged between 0-3 years. The placement is decided according to vacancies without taking distance from family into consideration, which limits the ability of parents or family members to visit the child. When the child reaches the age of three, he or she is moved to one of two pre-school homes for children aged 3-6 years. At school age, the child is moved yet again to one of three residential institutions for school children aged 7-14 (or in some cases 16) years.

CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW: Albania has acknowledged difficulty respecting international human rights and care standards for minors in prisons and pre-trial facilities. There is no comprehensive juvenile justice system in Albania, nor is there any comprehensive and systematic data gathering on juvenile delinquency in Albania. There are no appropriate means of dealing with children under age 14 years in conflict with the law, and the incidence of violence and murder by young people is high.

STREET CHILDREN AND CHILD LABOR: Child Labor is work carried out in violation of international and national conventions and laws that is damaging to the child. It is common in most societies for children to perform work of some form. Work is considered Child Labor when it deprives

⁷² Direct communication with UNICEF, 2002.

the child of the opportunity to access education; when the child is enslaved through force, debt, or trafficking; when the child is separated from family; and when the work is hazardous, either socially, morally, mentally, or physically. It can be paid or unpaid. Not included are activities considered beneficial to children in terms of learning practical and survival skills, helping with household and family duties, earning pocket money and contributing to the family, and building confidence, so long as these activities are of short duration.⁷³

% of Albanian Children Aged 5-14 who worked in 2000 ⁷⁴						
	Paid work	Unpaid work	Domestic work		Family work (farm or business)	Currently working
			<4 hours /day	4 or more hours /day		
Total	0.9	2.6	55.1	1.0	29.5	31.7
By Gender						
Male	1.0	2.9	48.0	0.4	33.5	35.6
Fem.	0.8	2.2	62.4	1.5	25.4	27.7
By Age						
5-9 years	0.6	1.6	33.5	0.1	15.2	16.3
10-14 years	1.2	3.4	73.4	1.7	41.6	44.7
By location						
Urban	0.5	2.9	49.1	0.6	3.3	6.7
Rural	1.1	2.4	58.2	1.2	43.2	44.8

The number of working children in Albania has been continuously growing over the last few years. According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2000 conducted by Instat, 32% of children from the age group 6 – 18 are currently working in some form, but precise data on child labor will not be available until mid 2002.⁷⁵ Much of the child labor is to be found in the informal sector. Petty commerce appears to be the most common occupation in which street children in particular are engaged. The number of children living or working in the streets of the main cities is on the rise. They are mostly selling things, washing cars, or shining shoes. Approximately one-third of those working are estimated to be engaged in street or market based activities.⁷⁶ Child labor is also used in the construction and agricultural sector.

In addition, children are engaged in a number of clearly illegal activities referred to in the new ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor. The following worst forms of child labor are found in Albania: working in forced labor situations (forced use of children by organized criminal groups for begging, prostitution, and

robbery); prostitution; and drug selling. Observers generally report that these forms of child labor are not only common but appear to be the rise.

4.3.2 ANALYSIS

DISABLED CHILDREN: Disabled people are mostly hidden from public view, largely due to a lack of information and knowledge on disability. There is still a widespread belief and stigma that disabled people are a burden for the families and society, helpless and not able to participate and contribute to society. The public is generally not yet prepared to accept disabled people as equal members of society and even many people with disabilities do not have confidence in their own abilities. The very poor physical infrastructure and almost inaccessible environment of Albania renders the integration of disabled people into the community even more difficult. A body of legislation on some issues of disability – such as the right to education, access and employment – does exist but has never been adequately implemented.

INSTITUTIONALIZED CHILDREN: The main reason for sending children to the residential institutions is poverty. Many poor families or single parents see no other option than sending their children to such institutions. Divorce, illness or death of one or both of the parents are also frequent reasons. Some young unmarried women who become mothers do not dare to tell their parents or their parents do not accept the child. There are strong incentives to place disabled children in the residential institutions or abandon them in the maternity ward, due to the stigma of shame for a family with a disabled family member and due to the lack of community-based services to help families raise disabled children.

A national policy and a new institutional framework has not yet been developed to secure the sustainability of the initiatives made so far. It is important to consolidate and sustain the efforts already made and to continue developing better conditions for children in residential care and in the difficult period of integration into the local community.

⁷³ "Action Against Child Labour", Nelien Haspels and Michele Jankanish, ILO, Geneva.

⁷⁴ MICS, Instat, 2000. A June/July 2000 survey of 1,452 children members of households.

⁷⁵ The ILO is conducting a national survey of working children in 2002.

⁷⁶ ILO Convention 182 does not designate street work as one of the worst forms of child labor, but there is a strong case for considering street work as one of the worst forms of child labor since street workers tend to be involved in abusive activities and since prostitution, drugs and child trafficking are street based activities.

CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW: The shortcomings in the treatment of children in conflict with the law are due factors including the use of the same court system for adults as for minors, a lack of trained officials to deal with and support minors, reliance on prison as the only method of punishment, and a general shortage of prevention and awareness initiatives including access to basic social services and community centers.⁷⁷

In Albania, a serious concern is the over-reliance on deprivation of liberty as a response to juvenile offenders. Deprivation of liberty is itself a violation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child when it is used as anything other than a last resort and when it is not of the shortest possible duration. It tends to lead to the violation of a wide range of other rights including the right to protection from torture and maltreatment, separation from adults, contact with family, and access to education and health services. Deprivation of liberty is placement in any kind of institution - penal, correctional, educational or protective - from which the child cannot leave at will. Alternatives to deprivation of liberty should be developed.

STREET CHILDREN AND CHILD LABOR: Child labor has re-emerged in the wake of transition in Albania and it has acquired new and unexpected dimensions as a large-scale socio-economic problem. Transformation of economic structures brought to life a large segment of shadow economy in which child labor is widely used. The number of children working under emerging "free market" conditions started to increase rapidly. General social disorder rendered children unprotected, particularly in relation to the employer. Children become an object of manipulation and exploitation under the conditions of practical absence of legal and administrative control and regulations.

Child labor is a problem for the children involved because it exposes them to psychological and physical injuries, criminality, and violence; it deprives them of schooling and attention; and it places them at risk of drug addiction, sexually transmitted diseases, and unwanted pregnancy. Child labor is a problem for society because it depreciates essential human capital which in

turn perpetuates poverty. These problems merge into a vicious circle when children of poor families do not attend school and hence have limited opportunity to move upward in society and escape poverty. Understanding of this pattern is behind a growing international recognition that reducing child labor, especially the worst forms, is a poverty alleviation strategy and not just a child rights issue.

Children trapped in the worst forms of child labor tend to be children from society's most vulnerable socio-economic groups, especially the poor. There is a well-established connection between child labor and poverty; it is common for children in extreme poverty to help their family survive by earning some income rather than attending school, since education cannot serve immediate needs. Sometimes labor is chosen over education due to problems in the education system, such as poor quality, unavailability in remote areas, large classes, and cost. Other factors can include insufficient protective legislation or enforcement, positive attitudes toward child labor, family structure, and internal migration.

The underground and criminal character of child labor makes it a difficult problem to tackle. Aside from the ratification of International Conventions, the Government of Albania signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 1999 with ILO-IPEC to fight child labor. The 2001 Government GPRS includes efforts to improve income distribution and increase primary and secondary school enrolment and retention rates, and the Government also has a National Strategy for Children with a plan of action for combating child labor, demonstrating that child labor has reached the Government agenda.

Although the problems of working children are generally recognized by the authorities, both at national and regional levels, a policy on child labor and an integrated approach to solving these problems are still missing. At the same time, the low capacity of the government to combat child labor is evident. The labor inspectors do not possess sufficient knowledge and experience on child labor issues. There is clearly a lack of coordination between different institutions and insufficient capacity to

⁷⁷ Towards a Comprehensive Juvenile Justice System for Albania, UNICEF, March 2000. http://www.unicef.org/albania/publications/juv_justice_albania.pdf

effectively respond to the multi-faceted nature of the child labor problem, and there is a lack of awareness at local and national level. Finally, there is a particular need to integrate the issue of child labor into national programs and policies.

The immediate elimination of child labor is impossible, but substantial long-term progress is possible when there is a broad political and social commitment behind a practical and clear national action plan, when there are key policy reforms, and when there is a shift in the attitudes of society.

4.3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

KANUN / BLOOD FEUDS

- Further training in tolerance and non-violent conflict resolution should be organized with teachers, children and community leaders in communities with blood feuds.
- Special education provisions and counseling should be offered to children confined at home.

DISABLED CHILDREN

- Coordination mechanism should be developed between different government institutions in order to address the problems of disabled people.
- Policy should be developed and resources should be allocated in order to provide community services for the development and integration of disabled children into society.

INSTITUTIONALIZED CHILDREN

- A policy reform should be designed on the issue of children at risk or deprived of parental care. This reform should include preventive schemes to institutionalization and alternatives to residential care like foster care.
- A reform is needed in the residential institutions. This will imply training of care-givers and provision of family homes for children.
- Special services should be designed for children who leave institutions.

CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW

- Albania needs to create alternative forms of punishment for minors rather than continuing to rely exclusively on imprisonment.
- The procedures for dealing with minors in conflict with the law should be improved.
- The Code of Penal Procedure, the Penal Code, and the rules and regulation regarding the prison and detention centers should be revised to reflect internationally recognized standards.
- Separate courts for minors should be established.
- Minors should have access to education while they are sentenced.
- A network of professionals (judges, prosecutors, lawyers, detention police, judiciary police, police in Commissariats) specialized in juvenile justice should be created and trained.
- A comprehensive data gathering and recording system for juveniles in conflict with the law should be set up. This information system should be accessible by professionals in the system and the general public, and should contain the basic information needed to evaluate and redefine relevant Government policies.
- Prevention: Efforts to reduce juvenile violence and increase awareness of juvenile justice issues should be undertaken.

STREET CHILDREN

- Schools and teachers have a key role to play in preventing this phenomenon and reintegrating street children back into the school system.
- Civil Society initiatives that emphasise the role of family and family-based support also show promise in dealing with the problem of street children. Greater cooperation between relevant NGOs and their ministerial counterparts would be beneficial.

CHILD LABOR

A multi-sectoral strategy is needed, consisting of the following steps:

- Knowledge base: Data collection and analysis

- Policy Development
 - Capacity Building – Strengthening national and local capabilities
 - Advocacy – Awareness Raising and mobilization
 - Legislation – Legal reform in accordance with international standards
 - Enforcement – Monitoring systems and strengthening labor inspection
- Prevention of child labor
 - Withdrawal of children from work
 - Rehabilitation of former child workers
 - Provision of alternatives to children and their parents
 - Mainstreaming child labor issues in socio-economic policies, programs and budgets.

5

Social Security

Millennium Development Goals

- **Reduce child mortality**
 - Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate
- **Improve maternal health**
 - Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio
- **Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases**
 - Have halted by 2015, and begun to reverse, the spread of HIV/AIDS
 - Have halted by 2005 and begun to reverse, the spread of other diseases such as tuberculosis
- **Achieve universal primary education**
 - Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

5.1 Health Care System

5.1.1 ASSESSMENT

The 2000 World Health Report ranked "Overall health system performance" in Albania as 55th out of 191 countries based on administrative indicators from 1997, and 64th based on health indicators.⁷⁸ Total Government spending on health care as a percentage of GDP rose in 2002. The main problems concerning health care in Albania can be categorized under (a) poor quality of health care and unequal access to health care services, and (b) disturbing trends in public health.

QUALITY AND ACCESS: The quality of primary health care has fallen in the past decade in both urban areas and village or remote areas. Albania's 51 hospitals contain 10,237 beds⁷⁹ and a significant but not precisely known portion (perhaps half) of health clinics and hospitals are either inactive or inadequate for the needs of the local population, in terms of modern equipment, sufficient well-trained staff, and available drugs. In addition building facilities very often face heating, electricity and water shortages.

Primary health care and hospital services are the two levels of Albanian health care, comprising 520 health centers, 41 district hospitals, 12 regional hospitals and the University Hospital Center in Tirana.⁸⁰ Sometimes poor hygiene and lack of maintenance is a real problem. Illustratively, many of the deaths from the 1996 cholera outbreak occurred amongst patients of the mental health institution in Elbasan because of poor hygiene. People with mental disorders, still a major stigma in Albanian society, are sometimes locked up for life in such institutions under very poor conditions.

Albania has a total of about 16,000 midwives and nurses, and Albania's rate of 1.3 physicians per 1000 inhabitants is less than half of the European Union's rate of 3 per 1000.⁸¹ People with higher income tend to travel farther to obtain medical treatment, suggesting an uneven geographic distribution of quality health care facilities.

The rates of immunization before age 12 months of children aged 18-30 months surveyed in 2000 are as follows, according to mothers declarations: 88.8% for measles;

⁷⁸ WHO, <http://www.who.int/whr/2001/archives/2000/en/pdf/Annex1-en.pdf>

⁷⁹ Social Indicators Yearbook, Instat, 2001.

⁸⁰ Public Investment Program (PIP) 2000-2003, Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Trade.

⁸¹ Women of the World: Laws and Policies Affecting Their Reproductive Lives: East Central Europe, Albanian Family Planning Association, 2000. www.crlp.org/pub_bo_wowece.html

83.3% for BCG (Bacille Calmette-Guerin – a tuberculosis vaccine); 97.6% and 53.4% for DPT (Diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus vaccine) doses 1 and 3 respectively; 99.2% and 53.6% for OPV (Oral poliovirus vaccine) doses 1 and 3 respectively; and 90.1% for the first dose of HBV (Hepatitis B vaccine).⁸² Higher rates are recorded by the national immunization registry. See Table 24 Diseases, Immunization, Medical Staff, Health Care and Infrastructure.

PUBLIC HEALTH: Health statistics should be treated with caution since there may sometimes be an incentive to distort data, to make the situation look better or worse than it is in order to attract more funding. There can also be a reporting bias, since data is not fully collected from private and public sources, so the number of reported incidents may be lower than the real number, and an improvement in reporting may appear like an epidemic.

Infant and maternal mortality remain very high by European standards but both show a decline since 1985; infant mortality was 28 deaths per 1000 live births in 2000, worse than in other regional countries, and the maternal mortality rate in 1998 was 21.6 deaths per 1000 live births. The infant mortality rate in some northern districts is almost twice the national rate. Albania does not disaggregate infant mortality rates by gender, and even though Albania adopted WHO standards for infant mortality statistics the official rate probably underestimates reality, since some deaths in the first 6 days after birth are recorded as stillbirths and many deaths that occur at home in rural areas are not reported. Under 5 mortality in 2000 was 33 deaths per 1000 live births,⁸³ making Albania's rate the 92nd highest in the world.⁸⁴ See Table 23 Life Expectancy and Mortality Rates. Maternal Mortality is especially high in the districts of Tropoja, Hasi, and Kukesi.

According to the National Institute for Statistics, life expectancy at birth in 1999 was 76.4 years for women and 71.7 years for men.⁸⁵ The WHO reported life expectancy at birth in 2000 to be

64.3 for males and 72.9 for females, and estimated "Healthy Life Expectancy" at birth to be an average of 59.4⁸⁶ years. Mortality rates fell between 1989 and 1996 for both genders among the 5-14 and 15-24 age groups, except for males aged 15-24 where it rose from 98.9 to 135.1 deaths per 100,000⁸⁷ relevant population, though the recent trend is a declining one. For males aged 5-14 the mortality rate is 59.3, and for females aged 5-14 and 15-24 it is 33.7 and 43.0 respectively.⁸⁸

The World Summit for Children stated that children should be exclusively breast-fed for their first 4-6 months, since breast-feeding improves nutrition and the immune system, but only roughly 9% of children aged 0-3 months in Albania are exclusively breast-fed according to a survey of 80 children in that age group.⁸⁹ While there are no reliable national statistics on breast-feeding, it is estimated that at least 60% of children aged 0-3 months are breast-fed, and more educated mothers are more likely to breast-feed their children. But those mothers who do breast-feed their children often feed their children using other methods as well. Many mothers still have mistaken perceptions about the ideal methods of nurturing children during their infancy.

In 2000 14.3% of children under 5 were moderately underweight (too thin) for their age and 4.3% of those were severely underweight. 31.7% of children under 5 were moderately stunted (too short) for their age, and 17.3% of those were severely stunted.⁹⁰ Boys and children of mothers with less education are more likely to be underweight or stunted. Many children show signs of severe iodine deficiency, partly due to the consumption of non-iodized salt, so a National Iodine Deficiency Disorder Action Plan has been prepared. Micronutrient deficiencies and protein-energy malnutrition are serious concerns.

Abortions are very commonplace nowadays; officially, Instat reported 390 abortions for every 1000 live births in 1999.⁹¹ The number of abortions per 100 live births peaked at 49.4 in 1993, falling to 31.5 by 1998. These figures grossly underestimate the true number of abortions since not all abortions are reported to

⁸² National Survey of EPI Coverage, IPH, 2000.

⁸³ Ibid; and Regional Monitoring Report, no. 7; and Regional Monitoring Report no. 8: A Decade of Transition, UNICEF, 2001. <http://www.unicef-icdc.org/presscentre/presskit/monee8/eng/>

⁸⁴ State of the World's Children 2002, UNICEF. <http://www.unicef.org/sowc02/>

⁸⁵ Women and Men in Albania, Instat, December 2001.

⁸⁶ World Health Report 2001, WHO. <http://www.who.int/whr/>

⁸⁷ Albania in figures, Instat, 1998.

⁸⁸ Regional Monitoring Report, no. 8, 2001, UNICEF.

⁸⁹ Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), Instat, 2000. <http://www.unicef.org/albania/publications/mics2000.pdf>

⁹⁰ Ibid

⁹¹ Social Indicators Yearbook, Instat, 2001.

the Ministry of Health, particularly those performed in private clinics. Only 17% of respondents to the KAPB Survey in 2000 reported using contraceptives. See Table 22 Population Data – Births, Deaths and Abortions.

The incidence of communicable diseases such

Possible Consequences of Unprotected Sexual Relations

- Unwanted Pregnancy
 - Unwanted Child
 - Poor Development
 - Death
 - Induced Abortion
 - Unsafe Abortion
 - Maternal Death
 - Complications
 - Psycho-Social Problems
 - Safe Abortion
 - Psycho-Social Problems
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases
 - AIDS-related Morbidity
 - Death
 - Cervical Cancers
 - Death
 - Pelvic Inflammatory Diseases
 - Infertility
 - Ectopic Pregnancies, etc.
 - Others, including Syphilis, etc.

Source: Youth & Reproductive Health in Countries in Transition, 1997, UNFPA.

as viral hepatitis and diarrhoeal diseases is high and there is an increasing incidence of chronic and non-infectious diseases. Diarrhoeal diseases occur mainly in the summer,⁹² while respiratory infections abound in the winter. Some diseases, like HIV/AIDS (see below) and the cholera outbreak of 1996, tend to be brought into the country by people coming from abroad. There have been no deaths from Malaria in Albania for over 25 years but Malaria could conceivably return to Albania since mosquitos on the coast are capable of carrying Malaria if they contact a person who became infected in another country. The official rate of 21.5 new infections of Tuberculosis per 100,000 persons per year likely reflects underreporting of cases, as do the official number of new cases in 1999 of 30 for Syphilis and 11 for Gonorrhoea.⁹³

Behavior of young people age 10-24 vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and drug use

Groups at risk in different cities were surveyed from Oct 2001-Jan 2002

100 Mobile people in Korça

- 90% are sexually active
- 40% have sex with sex workers
- 82% don't always use condoms
- 18% have sex for money or drugs
- 27% have sex under the influence of drugs
- 56% used drugs (including alcohol) in the past month
- 7% are IDUs

170 Drug Users in Tirana and Shkodra

- 50% in Shkodra had 6-10 sexual partners in past year
- 86% don't always use condoms
- 69% have sex under the influence of drugs
- 32% used heroin in past month
- 27% in Shkodra and 65% in Tirana are IDUs
- 74% of IDUs share needles
- 25% in Shkodra had no info on HIV/AIDS/STI

50 Sex Workers in Vlora

- 80% are abused by clients or pimps
- 50% have had 100+ partners per month
- 90% don't always use condoms
- 80% have had an STI in past year

For more details see: RAR, UNICEF, 2002. <http://www.unicef.org/albania/rar.htm>

The prevalence of HIV/AIDS is not yet high but health experts are concerned about the potential for a very rapid growth in the number of cases, reported at 72 cases of HIV/AIDS as of November 2001.⁹⁴ The National AIDS Program (NAP) of the Institute of Public Health (IPH) once estimated that the actual number of cases could be as much as 50 times greater than the official number.⁹⁵ Although NAP is not very active, the Government has set up a safe blood supply; all blood donations have been screened for HIV since 1993, and blood supplies are also screened for Hepatitis B and C and Syphilis. Commitment to maintain the sentinel surveillance system⁹⁶ established in 1998 to track the spread of AIDS and other infectious diseases by monitoring specific groups is

⁹² The 1996 cholera outbreak originated in Turkey. Cholera is not endemic in Albania.

⁹³ National Strategy of the Health System, Draft: 2000-2010, MoH and WHO, May 2000.

⁹⁴ Direct communication with the Institute of Public Health, 2002.

⁹⁵ Country Programme Recommendation: Albania, UNICEF, 2000.

⁹⁶ Monitors drug users, sex workers, and blood donors.

uncertain, but the IPH is receiving assistance in this area from the UN.

DRUGS: Drug use is expanding very rapidly, out of proportion to the currently limited capacity of Albania to deal with the problem. The MoPO officially estimated the number of drug users at 30,000, while the estimates of some NGOs are half that amount, perhaps due partly to differing definitions of the term “drug user”.⁹⁷ No national surveys of drug use have been performed; a few local surveys have concentrated on a couple urban areas and no research has been done in rural and remote areas even though drug use is no longer just an urban phenomenon. See Table 19 Data on drug users and treatments.

There is a single Toxicological Clinic in Albania, located in the Tirana University Hospital Center. This is insufficient for the size of the drug problem in Albania, and the Psychiatric Clinic in that Center does not work with drug users. 400 people requested assistance from the Toxicological Clinic in the first half of 2001 and 95% of them were male.⁹⁸ These are people who felt compelled to come forward; many more choose to stay away out of fear of negative social consequences and stigmatization. This clinic does not specialize in drug problems; the drug section has two bare beds and while the attending doctor has gained considerable practical experience he has not had formal training. The clinic practices methadone treatments, which is the substitution drug to treat heroine addiction. No walk-in clinics or rehabilitation centers exist.

5.1.2 ANALYSIS

QUALITY AND ACCESS: A huge challenge will be improving deteriorated health care infrastructure overburdened by economic migration, which has disenfranchised many people from access to health care. An overarching problem is the centralization of the Ministry of Health, which leaves it preoccupied with operational activities and unresponsive and unaware of the needs of local communities. The creation of a new Directorate for Health Policy and Planning within the Ministry is a big step towards higher involvement in defining health policy though there has yet to be any evident decentralization. A draft strategy for the next 10 years and a detailed Plan of Action has been

drafted with WHO assistance though its parliamentary ratification has been exceedingly delayed.

The health care system needs to remove overlapping responsibilities, and could benefit from better information systems for the management of health services. In particular, the health care system lacks adequate capacity to perform financial management, engage in budgeting, or to enforce contracts with individuals. Different hospitals and other institutions are funded according to outdated historical criteria. There is no standard definition of what facilities and drugs should be available at each hospital, and the hospitals themselves are not geographically distributed in proportion to the needs of the population in each area. There are not enough resources to sustain existing hospitals, nor is there enough infrastructure to provide electricity, safe water supply nor a viable medical waste disposal system. No health service centers exist which target the reproductive needs of adolescents.

While there continues to be a lack of capacity to implement and enforce existing legislation, there is also a need for new stronger legislation on health issues. An International Pharmaceutical Conference examined health legislation in Albania and found that all six directorates of the MoH need to review their respective sectoral legislation. In particular, the Pharmaceutical and Hospital Directorates are in need of urgent legislative examination of their sectors for the regulation of and creation of a legal framework for the ten-year old privatization of pharmacies and the soon to emerge private hospitals and clinics. Drawing upon UN technical assistance and lessons learned in the region a hospital services and privatization law is being drafted, and progress has also been made in examining pharmaceutical legislation.

Staff do not receive enough incentives to motivate them to raise their level of commitment or productivity. The low level of salaries (though it is expected to modestly rise soon) makes it difficult for the health care system to compete with foreign or private organizations in terms of financial compensation, work conditions, and personnel retention. A ‘brain drain’ from rural to urban areas and from all of Albania abroad is a large and ongoing concern. The proportion of staff who

⁹⁷ Direct communication with UNDCP, 2001.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

are skilled in different fields is not correctly balanced to match the current needs of Albanian, due to a lack of modern training programs and a lack of opportunities for existing staff to acquire new or sharpen old skills.⁹⁹

Due to electricity shortages and other problems, vaccines are not always maintained at proper cool temperatures. The objective of an agreement between MoH and UNICEF is for the Government to finance 100% of primary vaccine and injection supplies for children under age 2 years by 2005. The Government has a National Plan of Action for Immunization 2001-2005.

The prevalence of informal user fees is affecting access to and the quality of health services. Health care is also affected by perceptions of over 80% of people that both donating and receiving blood is risky.¹⁰⁰

PUBLIC HEALTH: Infrastructure endangers the implementation and practice of public health through dangerous roads, uncertain water supplies, shortages of electricity for heating and diagnostics, and a lack of safe methods of disposing of waste and sewage. The typical Albanian diet is of poor quality with low fruit and

Key Issues in Reproductive & Sexual Health

- Need for clear policies and programs
- Inadequate social support system
- Human resources needed for increased knowledge and skills, including financial
- Improved access to sound and relevant information and services
- Unprotected sexual relations and their consequences
- Sexual abuse, exploitation, stereotypes and violence against young women

Source: Youth & Reproductive, UNFPA

vegetable consumption, and there are misconceptions about the value of breast-feeding relative to the use of baby formula. Worrying trends in life styles include more liberal sexual norms, trafficking of women and children for prostitution, drinking and driving, high rates of cigarette consumption, and rising illicit drug use (in concordance with the disproportionately high mortality rates for the "Male 15-24 age-

group" above). These threats need to be addressed through improvements in basic infrastructure services, enforcement of quality controls and protection of vulnerable groups, and education to encourage healthier lifestyle choices. International dates such as World Health Day, AIDS Day and No-Tobacco Day are good opportunities for advocacy campaigns.

Current health education is insufficient. Firstly, parents do not openly discuss drugs and sexuality with their children since they feel uncomfortable and lack information. Secondly, formal health education in the 8-year school level suffers from a lack of pedagogical and resource materials, and sometimes teachers are too uncomfortable to teach the health education components. The first component consist of 17 hours during the biology course, and the second consists of 3 hours of instruction about tobacco, drugs and HIV/AIDS during the sociology course.

Typical causes of infant mortality are respiratory diseases, congenital anomalies, and diarrhoea and infectious diseases. Some rural households have patriarchal attitudes to childbirth and prefer their first born child to be male. Typical causes of mortality among adults include cancers and cardiovascular diseases. Typical causes of maternal mortality are postnatal hemorrhage and eclampsia, infections, and pregnancy-induced hypertension, but the frequency of each cause is unknown since maternal deaths are classified only as occurring during delivery or abortion.

High maternal mortality can often be attributed to the low status of women, deteriorating quality of basic services, unsanitary conditions during pregnancy, poor information, and concentration of services in urban areas. 90% of births were attended by a skilled medical professional in 2000¹⁰¹ but the delivery wards and rural health centers are in poor shape. Many of the direct causes of maternal mortality can be prevented by proper and cost-effective antenatal, natal, and postnatal services. As in many other areas of the health care system, delivery is supposedly free, but service improves when informal payments are made. Doctors are usually available in urban areas, but the majority of pregnancies in rural areas are attended by nurses or midwives.

⁹⁹ South East Europe Strategic Review on Social Cohesion, Health Network, Country Report, Albania, Tirana 2001.

¹⁰⁰ Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices and Beliefs (KAPB) Survey, 2001.

¹⁰¹ Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), Instat, 2000.

The portion of births delivered at home has risen slightly during the transition.

Only

- 42% of Albanian women have had a gynaecological exam
- 20% of women know what a breast examination is
- 18% of mothers say they saw a doctor during the first trimester of pregnancy

Source: Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices and Beliefs (KAPB) Survey, 2001.

Abortion and family planning were illegal under the Communist regime due to the policy of promoting rapid population growth. This likely explains part of the very high pre-1990s maternal mortality rates, as pregnant women illegally carried out unsafe abortions. Maternal deaths were the result of illegal abortion in 55% of cases between 1980 and 1990.¹⁰² The frequency of abortions can partly be explained by the infrequent use of contraceptives and the increase in sexual activity. Religious beliefs do not seem to inhibit abortions. When family planning services are available, the Government often does not provide information on them, or they are not affordable due to transportation, under the table fees, or the cost of pharmaceuticals. Access is sometimes even more difficult for immigrants as there is often a language barrier and they often migrate illegally.

Men in all age groups tend to refuse condoms while women remain poorly informed on the importance of condoms for protection against Sexually Transmitted Infections. The low status of women in Albania, especially in remote rural areas, has generally been linked to their low level of education and low self-esteem. Psychologically, many Albanian women remain poorly equipped to negotiate safe sex.

Source: HIV/AIDS in South Eastern Europe, UNICEF, July 2001.

The Council of Ministers considers family planning a basic human right. The 1995 Law on the Interruption of Pregnancy permits abortion with broad criteria and mandatory counseling within the first 12 weeks in the case of unwanted pregnancy, and within the first 22 weeks in the case of medical complications in the mother or

fetus. There is a broader Reproductive Health draft Law awaiting Parliamentary approval. In Albania the modern methods of contraception are often imported and costly, however some are freely distributed by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and other agencies. A World Bank survey found that: (a) Many Albanians still have only partial or mistaken information about contraception. (b) The younger generation is much more liberal than the conservative older generation, and is interested in having better sex education. (c) Family planning information does have an impact on those it reaches.¹⁰³

Most drug users are young (adolescents and people in their twenties) and unemployed. Drug use is rising among teenagers; some periodic surveys indicate that the number of youths using drugs doubles every two years. Marijuana remains the most prevalent drug overall and the most common injected drug is heroin. Factors that increase the risk of drug abuse are: Affordability (relatively well off urban youth); Urban school attendance (drugs are sometimes offered and distributed for free); Youth selling drugs and members of gangs trafficking in drugs; Prostitution (especially female prostitutes in coastal cities); and inactivity/absence of entertainment opportunities. Curiosity and the desire to imitate seem to be the main motivation to try drugs, followed by feelings of depression and helplessness.

People usually have their first contact with drugs either as an individual with a drug user or as a group at a nightclub. It is important to promote healthy lifestyles amongst children and youth in order to discourage and prevent future drug use. A key means of promoting prevention and reducing the harmful effects of drug abuse is the training of social workers in drug education and counseling. It is important to note that drugs including alcohol and cannabis impair the judgment of drug users and can lead them to engage in unsafe sex.

Most HIV/AIDS cases are male, aged 20-35 years old, infected abroad through the sexual route. HIV blood testing should be free and anonymous to anyone who comes forward, as outlined in the national strategy. Counseling before and after testing is available at the Institute of Public Health in Tirana only. Limited treatment opportunities are available to people suffering from HIV/AIDS related infections. The

¹⁰² Women of the World: Laws and Policies Affecting Their Reproductive Lives: East Central Europe. 2000. Albanian Family Planning Association. www.crlp.org/pub_bo_wowece.html

¹⁰³ 'Albanian Public's Perceptions of the Health Care System', cited in: HIV/AIDS in South Eastern Europe, UNICEF, July 2001.

UN Theme Group (UNTG) on HIV/AIDS in Albania was created in 1997 and in 1998 it organized a national conference on “Policies of Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS/STI Epidemic in Albania” which resulted in a strategy paper that prioritizes political commitment; prevention; supervision, monitoring and research; treatment, care and support; social, legal and ethical issues; and inter-sectoral and multi-disciplinary cooperation.¹⁰⁴ In the framework of the 2000 Law on the Prevention of HIV/AIDS Infection – the first in the region - an Inter-Ministerial Commission on HIV/AIDS has been established to support the projects/initiatives/programs on the identification and prevention of HIV/AIDS cases.

5.1.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

GENERAL

HIV/AIDS Vulnerable Groups

Each group has different reasons for being at risk but they all share a low level of HIV awareness and sexual education that contributes to risky behavior.

- Injecting Drug Users (IDUs): Very little is known about the culture of needle exchange in Albania or the number of IDUs, but their numbers are rising.
- Homosexual men: Little is known about their habits. Stigmatization makes it difficult for the homosexual community to organize or obtain services from the Government. The proportion of reported HIV cases that involve homosexuals is higher than their proportion in the total population.
- Mobile populations: Migration can lead to higher risk of exposure and the importation of HIV/AIDS. Illegal migrants to or from Albania are common and usually avoid health care institutions out of fear of the consequences if their illegal status is discovered.
- Young people: The young, especially males, are more likely to be IDUs or to migrate multiple times to nearby countries in search of informal employment.
- Sex Workers / Victims of Trafficking: they are at higher risk of exposure without protection; additionally many of them are going abroad and coming back, bringing home the risk.

- Improvement of the quality and efficiency of primary health care as the most effective way of achieving improvements in health status, including the training of community based health staff.
- Better public information systems on Health Reform and Health Care workers
- Environmental health agencies such as those responsible for the safety of food should work more closely together.
- At a higher level there should be more co-ordination and collaboration between international donors and organizations and stakeholders within the country.¹⁰⁵
- Confidentiality in the reporting system should be encouraged so that people will be less hesitant to use public health services.
- Communities (and other countries) that receive Albanian migrants should target migrant populations with specialized and community based services, especially in the area of reproductive health.
- Mobile health units could provide information, screening, and treatment.
- Exploration of the potential role of pharmacists and pharmacies in the promotion of community health and disease surveillance is urgent.
- Improve parental awareness and training for Early Childhood Development (ECD) and involve civil society in voluntary support of community based ECD services.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

- It is critical to break down those social taboos that pose an obstacle to the aggressive prevention of a potential HIV epidemic in Albania.
- Family planning should be recognized as a poverty reducing strategy, and as an integral part of preventive health care since Albania has such a young population.
- The Government and international community need to promote and devote resources towards Safe Motherhood to reduce Albania's high rate of maternal mortality.
- Women's health should be addressed be-

¹⁰⁴ HIV/AIDS in South Eastern Europe, UNICEF, July 2001.

¹⁰⁵ WHO and the World Bank have recently spearheaded such an initiative through the creation of a “Task Group on Health”.

Adolescent Reproductive Health Recommendations

- Participation of youth in planning, implementing, monitoring & evaluating youth-related projects, programs and policies
- Providing young people not only knowledge but also skills to enhance their capacities to communicate, make decisions and plan their lives using innovative and popular channels for communication and including peer education
- Improving access to services and the development of youth-friendly reproductive health care approaches
- Sensitising and training service providers, teachers, parents, the media & policy-makers on youth issues
- Developing relevant sex education programs for in- and out-of-school youth
- Undertaking qualitative research to ensure appropriate and effective interventions
- Strengthening linkages between Government and non-governmental organisations.

Source: Youth & Reproductive Health in Countries in Transition, 1997, UNFPA.

ginning with childhood including all the dimensions of nutrition, health education, and health care.

- The Government policy on contraceptives logistics and management systems should be put in place, in order to monitor the distribution and use of contraceptives, and to identify the need for supply, which is sometimes irregular and expensive.
- Identify target groups for whom the contraceptives should be available and distributed freely.
- Implementation of a subsidiary policy from government to put contraceptives under the Health Insurance Scheme.
- The IPH needs to prioritize and target vulnerable groups with harm reducing and preventative initiatives.
- Voluntary and confidential HIV/AIDS testing and counseling should be available nationally.
- Encourage young people to make healthier lifestyle decisions is absolutely crucial, since investment in prevention would pre-

vent huge social costs in the future. There should be a concrete policy for collaboration between schools and health care providers to educate youth on reproductive matters.

DRUG DEMAND REDUCTION

The drug problem must be tackled from both supply and demand reduction perspectives. The MoPO has a monopoly over drug supply reduction and it should but does not collaborate with the Ministry of Health which should be seriously involved in demand reduction. See section 7.1 Organized Crime for discussion of supply.

- The public could benefit from initiatives to raise awareness of drug issues. The most important group is youth, who can be targeted directly through school and university curricula and activities, ideally with the participation of teachers and parents as well.
- A National Drug Center could be created as a focal point for Government, the media, and NGOs. Such a center could coordinate a national anti-drug strategy, drug-use research, and information dissemination.
- A glaring point is the absence of specialized clinics, especially of a center where drug addicts can seek therapy and eventual rehabilitations of addicts.

5.2 Education System

5.2.1 ASSESSMENT

Education system in Albania		
Age group	Grades	Level
Up to 5		Pre-school
6-14	1-8	Primary
15-18	9-12	High school
15-18	9-12 or 13	Technical
18-23	1-4 or 5	Universities

While about one quarter of the inhabitants of Albania are either teachers or students, overall enrolment in education institutions has fallen during the transition. The education system is severely strained and the quality of education is suffering, especially in rural and remote areas, and not all youth have equal access to education. In addition, many

students drop out of compulsory education (3% in 1999¹⁰⁶), especially girls. This is creating a disadvantaged stratum in society and unless rapid and effective measures are taken soon, this stratum will grow substantially and pose an obstacle to the development of Albania's market and democratic system. 'Hidden' drop outs are also a problem; this refers to the inequality of chances within the classroom, where it is common for teachers to discriminate against difficult children.

The overall ratio of students to teachers in Albania is normal but the number of teachers is relatively high in rural areas and too low in urban areas, where high school classrooms are overloaded and 40 or 50 students in a class is considered normal. Many schools cope with their insufficient teaching and classroom capacity by having two or three shifts of students in a day with short class periods. Most teachers are female but males hold most leadership positions.

In 2000 there were 229 students per 1000 inhabitants and 58% of those aged 3-22 years old were students, a low portion by regional and European standards, largely explained by the fact that only 38% of the pre-primary age group attends school.¹⁰⁷ The literacy rate in Albania is similar to the Southeast European average. Literacy is lower according to the following categories: those over the age of 50, those living in the North, and those living in rural areas. Differences between men and women are not substantial except among those over 50 years old. 8% of males and 22% of females over the age of 15 are illiterate.¹⁰⁸

Teaching has lost its prestigious reputation relative to the sciences, medicine and economics. No longer do the best students compete for entry into faculties of teacher training. The Government has taken some initiatives but most work in the past decade on education has been driven by NGOs such as SOROS, Catholic Relief Services, and Save the Children, along with UNICEF. The Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) is now in the process of elaborating the educational strategy and designing and setting

up a new in-service teacher training system.

High schools are classified as either vocational or general. The MoES has begun experimenting with a 'profilisation' process in 15 high schools, under which high schools specialize in exact sciences or social sciences. Aiming to reduce the workload burden of students and better match their interests with their programs, the new textbooks and curricula etc. were prepared very quickly after 3 years the students seem to feel even more overloaded.

Most teachers continue to provide dedicated service in spite of their relatively low salaries, but some students are denied quality services when their families cannot afford to pay for them. This is noticeable in high schools more than in primary schools. Another concern that has yet to receive attention is the pressure a certain number of education professionals place on students to participate in sexual activity, by abusing their power within the education system. It might be worthwhile to conduct a survey to determine how widespread the problem is. Anecdotal evidence suggests that most known offenders are rarely disciplined.¹⁰⁹

The number of private schools is growing rapidly and their quality varies greatly. Sometimes businesspeople without a background in education open and manage private schools for profit with little regard to quality, taking advantage of weak standards and licensing requirements. The MoES¹¹⁰ has done much to further the physical rehabilitation of public schools but rapid urbanization has left some children without access to education, as is the case in the Tirana District of Kamez where the only facility is a school for 700 students.¹¹¹ Total Government spending on education as a percentage of GDP rose in 2002.

Albania's system of institutional pre-school education does not respond to the actual needs of children and remains expensive or out of reach to a majority of Albanian children. There are few kindergartens; only about one-third of Albanian children aged 3-5 years attend

¹⁰⁶ Drop-out Phenomenon for Elementary Education, MoES, April 2000.

¹⁰⁷ Global Education Project, UNICEF, 2000.

¹⁰⁸ State of the World Population 2001, UNFPA. "<http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2001/english/indicators/indicators1.html>" \t " _blank" [Http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2001/english/indicators/indicators1.html](http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2001/english/indicators/indicators1.html)

¹⁰⁹ Direct communication with 3 students and 2 university staff, 2002.

¹¹⁰ Pooling resources with SOROS and the World Bank.

¹¹¹ Founded by SOROS. This area contains people from the North who are also the target of stereotypes by some Tirana dwellers.

kindergarten. The number of crèches in Albania has fallen during the transition, and existing crèches lack adequate infrastructure and caregivers with pedagogical backgrounds. North-East Albania in particular is experiencing declining NGO activity and low municipal budgets that do not prioritize crèches. There is an urgent need to develop new models of early childhood development (ECD) that consider the holistic needs of children in terms of normal psychological growth and development.

5.2.2 ANALYSIS

Uncontrolled movements of rural families towards urban areas has led to increasing urban class sizes since the distribution of teachers no longer matches demographics. Schools are nearly frozen by their lack of financial resources and need to become more aware of their existing opportunities and rights, such as the law for services to third parties. Teaching methods are outdated and there is a huge generation gap between older teachers and students. School infrastructure is inadequate in many areas. One obstacle to change in some places is the attitude that schools need modern devices and the Internet to make progress. Expectations about the results that could be gained from these items are sometimes exaggerated. The system needs to make use of existing resources first and foremost, fostering local networks and resources as a priority before linking to foreign resources electronically.

The education system lacks a systematic approach and strategy and has problems with collaboration and reporting procedures. For instance schools currently receive salaries from municipalities but report to the directorates of education. There is no close connection between universities and schools, such as joint training relationships. Instead, Universities are detached, not cooperating with the day-to-day life of schools. When tentative relations do emerge, they are never regulated by the ministry or institutionalized through monitoring, follow-up, or formal contracts; there are big delays without such tools. Joint projects and other forms of collaboration are an unexplored area of useful intervention.

Policy makers need to seriously address the system of incentives and salaries in place. It is common for rural teachers to abandon teaching,

which reduces the number of qualified teachers and contributes to the drop-out phenomenon. As of July 2001 the average pre-university teacher earns a gross salary per month of lek 18,000 (net lek 16,500), while university teachers earn a gross salary per month ranging from lek 27,000 to 58,800.¹¹²

A small subsidy to cover some basic school expenses is paid to those families that can demonstrate very low incomes, which leads some families to obtain false documents claiming an income of 0. The practice of granting scholarships to students who earn perfect marks throughout high school sometimes leads to pressure on teachers to inflate marks.

There has been no item for teacher training in the budget since 1998 when the competency was delegated from the Institute of Pedagogical Research to the educational directorates of districts which were unprepared and lacked resources. The function was delegated without corresponding financial decentralization, leaving training up to the initiative of individual teachers, who needed to find alternate sources of funding and do not have the incentive to upgrade themselves with such low salaries and desperate conditions. NGOs tried to relieve the situation but there is an urgent need for a national training system in Albania. Some teachers with professional training have lost their jobs or switched to the private sector where salaries are higher, implying a need for greater stability of personnel.

There has been a lot of reviewing of curricula but little revising. Elementary schools (8 year) have been consolidated but there are problems with the high school curricula including:

- (a) Methodology – interactive methods need to be introduced.
- (b) Content – there is no continuity of transition between the knowledge youth gain in elementary school and high school.¹¹³

MoES has no strategy or specialists focused on the drop-out phenomenon. Youth who drop out of or finish school, especially young men, are at risk of (a) social exclusion, and (b) entering the criminal economy, especially when they have low income and are unemployed.¹¹⁴

Reasons for not attending or dropping out of school offered by the MoES for the years 1991-1997 include poor implementation of the law on

¹¹² Direct communication with the Ministry of Education and Science, 2002.

¹¹³ The WB recently set up the center for re-evaluation to examine and develop models and questionnaires on the performance of students and teachers.

¹¹⁴ Albania: Filling the Vulnerability Gap, WB Technical Paper No. 460, February 2000. <http://www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/regions.htm> click Albania, bank reports.

Compulsory Education by local authorities, low incomes especially in rural areas, the need for children to work to support their family, episodes of poor public security, lack of interest in education, lower quality of teachers, uncontrolled movement of people to cities and abroad, poor infrastructure, and blood feuds between families where children are threatened.¹¹⁵ Additional reasons may be parents' attitudes towards school and perceptions of how schooling contributes to meeting future needs, patriarchal mentalities, the tendency of some religions to discourage female schooling, lack of necessary documentation proving residential status in a District, participation in the black and informal labor market, unmotivated teachers, rapid and uncontrolled migration, and the lack of Government-provided transportation to cover large distances where kidnapping is a risk. The Albanian Human Rights Group (AHRG) reported that 900 children did not attend school in 2001 due to fear of revenge.¹¹⁶

'Hidden' drop outs – discrimination within the classroom – is a poorly understood phenomenon in Albania that is neglected within the education system and contributes to the regular school drop-out phenomenon. Teachers play the key role in preventing or perpetuating 'hidden' drop-outs, but most are not professionally well prepared to deal with it since they lack sufficient knowledge of the psychology of difficult students and participatory learning is uncommon.

Caregivers in the crèche system tend to be hired by municipalities without meeting any standard criteria, and they tend not to receive training after they are hired, so it is unsurprising that caregivers are not prepared to foster all aspects of childhood development. Caregivers need information and advice on how to support infants' and toddlers' emotional, social, cognitive, language and physical development; - how to recognize and respond to each child's temperament and interests; - how to create an environment that is safe, healthy and stimulating; and - how to work with families and other professionals to ensure a quality program. The physical conditions of crèches need improvement since furniture, equipment and educational materials are poor, deteriorated, or absent. Albania should improve existing child care services and practices by building upon the success of low-cost community models and by enhancing the responsibility and

professionalism of health and social work practitioners.

Now that the emergency phase is over, MoES should tackle the issues of concern to Albania's education system using a systemic approach by analyzing the inputs, processes, and outputs of the system, to ensure well-grounded and feasible decisions.

5.2.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- MoES of Albania should make use of its internal intellectual resources to design its educational development strategy in an open and inclusive process involving multiple stakeholders to build a long-term compromise and commitment toward its implementation.
- MoES should harmonize/coordinate the efforts of its own state institutions and the NGOs operating in the field of education in full compliance with its strategic educational development plan.
- MoES should develop more effective supporting and reporting procedures and instruments.
- MoES should formulate a strategy to reduce the drop-out rate based on in-depth analysis and targeting areas with the highest drop-out rates.
- The institutionalization of the in-service teacher training system is an imperative.
- Pre-service training or teacher preparation faculties should better update their everyday activity in concert with the most recent school developments by establishing close connections with the latter.
- The best interactive teaching practices introduced through various projects and programs should be supported and replicated through Albanian schools.
- Encourage cooperative initiatives between universities and schools. Alongside the academic and scientific research function, the universities should make use of all the possibilities provided for them by the law on higher education to better carry out the third function that of service to the third party i.e. the schools. The profit would be a two-way one.

¹¹⁵ Drop-out Phenomenon for Elementary Education, MoES, April 2000.

¹¹⁶ Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2001: Albania, US State Department, March 2002. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2001/eur/8219pf.htm>

- Teacher salaries should be raised and other performance incentives for the teachers should be developed to help in upgrading the social recognition of the teaching profession in particular and the education sector in general.
- The infrastructure in public schools should be carefully addressed.
- Literacy drives among target groups
- ‘Hidden’ drop-out should be recognized as a priority and teachers need to adopt methodologies and strategies that include marginalized students.
- Children confined to their homes due to blood-feuds need alternative sources of education, peaceful conflict resolution techniques could be incorporated into school curricula, and some communities would benefit from training more teachers to set an example of non-violence and tolerance in communication.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (ECD)

- Special priority must be given to the implementation of alternative methods of ECD, such as family and community based models involving the child-mother-caregiver triad.
- The Government should be involved in all phases of civil society and donor ECD programs, so that these ministries can gain center authority over the programs in the future and disseminate the programs and their experience throughout Albania. Pilots project could become training grounds for other caregivers.
- Introduce pre-service courses for caregivers in the Faculty of Nurses and for teachers in the Pedagogical Universities.
- More caregivers should be trained to apply child-centered methodology while caring for infants and toddlers.
- Prepare pre-school education standards.
- Improve cooperation with international organizations acting in Albania in the field of ECD, and synchronize interventions in the Education sector in general together with ECD interventions.

6 Environmental Security

Millennium Development Goal

- **Ensure environmental sustainability**
 - Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources
 - Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water

The 1998 Constitution calls for a “healthy and ecologically suitable environment for the present and future generations”, the “rational exploitation of forests, waters, pastures as well as other natural resources, based on the sustainable development principle”, and the right of citizens “to be informed on the environmental situation and its protection”.

6.1 Natural Environment

6.1.1 ASSESSMENT

Albanian Geography ¹¹⁷	
Total surface area of Albania	28,748 km ²
Inland Water Surface	1,350 km ²
-River network	721 km ²
-Natural lakes	325 km ²
-Artificial lakes	174 km ²
-Coastal lagoons	130 km ²
Terrestrial surface	27,392 km ²
-Hills	47%
-Mountains	28%
-Plains	25%
Coastline	362 km
Average yearly sun power on soil	2,107 kwh/m ²
Average yearly rainfall	1,430 mm

“Uncontrolled urban and squatter developments, inadequate wastewater

Main rivers and lakes

River Drini connects Albania with Kosovo and Macedonia
 River Vjosa flows from Greece into Albania
 River Shkumbini divides the north and the south of Albania
 Lake Ohrid is along the border with Macedonia
 Lake Prespa is along the border with Macedonia
 Lake Shkoder is along the border with Montenegro

treatment and high soil erosion are damaging coastal water quality and reducing the potential of tourism.”¹¹⁹ The impact on tourism is just one of the costs of pollution which are too often unrealized or underestimated. Other costs are the impact on public health and economic sustainability. The National Environment Agency was created in 1998 with the amendment of the 1993 Law on Environmental Protection, and was converted into the Ministry of Environmental Protection in 2001 with 70 employees. The elevation in status seems to be having a positive effect. The Government published reports on the State of the Environment (SOE) in 1995, 1999, and 2001. The National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) was adopted in 1994 and updated in 2001, and the National Environmental Health Action Plan (NEHAP) was adopted in 1999. There is a Regional Environmental Agency (REA) in each of Albania's 12 Prefectures, responsible for environmental impact assessment. The Government has designated numerous Protected Areas¹²⁰ and is integrating with the European Environmental Agency (EEA).¹²¹ Albania is a member of the Regional Environmental Reconstruction Program

¹¹⁷ Albania: A Patrimony of European Values, September 2000, UNDP.

¹¹⁸ World Factbook 2001: Albania, CIA, 2001. <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/al.html>

¹¹⁹ The Road to Stability and Prosperity in South Eastern Europe, WB, March 2000. <http://www.seerecon.org/RegionalInitiatives>

¹²⁰ Listed at http://www.unep-wcmc.org/protected_areas/data/nat2.htm

¹²¹ <http://www.eea.eu.int/>

Main Albanian Environmental Laws

Law on Environment Protection, 1993, amended 1998, under revision.
 Law on the Forest Service Police, 1992
 Law on the Forest Revenue, 1993
 Law on City Planning, 1993, amended 1998
 Law on Plant Protection Service, 1993
 Law on the Development of Areas with Tourism Priority, 1993
 Law on Fishing and Aquaculture, 1995
 Law on Pastures and Meadows, 1995
 Law on Protection by Ionic Radiation, 1995
 Law on Water Resources, 1996
 Law on Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Regulation, 1996
 Law on Public Waste Removal, 1996
 Law on Adherence to Basel Convention, 1997
 Law on Oil and Gas Processing, Transport and Trade, 1999

(RERP) under the Stability Pact.¹²²

EROSION: Soil quality and erosion is monitored by the Institute of Soils. Soil Erosion is certainly the biggest environmental problem in some Albanian communities, but it is difficult to rank the importance of environmental issues overall. Factors affecting the productivity of land are crucial considering that agriculture and forestry account for over 50% of GDP. Erosion is a problem because it reduces the productivity of agricultural land, it plugs waterways and hydro-dams with silt, and it increases the level of dust in the atmosphere. About 50,000 hectares of land are polluted by the oil industry. The level of salinization, chemicals and metals in the soil are also problems in other areas. Another environmental problem affecting land is deforestation. Government bodies themselves consume more fuelwood than the Government legally licenses and sells on the market, and there is a substantial amount of illegal logging carried out to meet the needs of private industry and households.

AIR QUALITY: Air quality is monitored by the Public Health Institute (PHI) and the Hydro-Meteorological Institute. Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂) levels fell early in the 1990s but they are rising again and becoming a concern along with

Carbon Dioxide (CO₂), Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x), and dust and soot. Ozone (O₃) is not measured.

WATER QUALITY: Ibania has plenty of fresh water resources but they are concentrated in a few key lakes and rivers, largely across international boundaries, making water management a cross-border issue. It is important to control water levels and quality in order to mitigate flooding, ensure adequate reserves for hydropower and irrigation, and provide water that is safe for drinking and fishing. Albania has a 1996 Law on Water Resources and prepared a Water Resource Management Plan. Agricultural chemicals

Protected Areas ¹²³	
Strictly protected areas	14,500 ha
National parks	56,440 ha
Nature Monuments	4,700 ha
Managed areas	42,898 ha
Protected landscapes	29,873 ha
Protected resource areas	18,200 ha

and industrial and domestic waste is seeping into groundwater, threatening drinking supplies.

WASTE MANAGEMENT: Waste is a huge problem in Albania since the lack of organized waste management often leads to untreated wastewater and the use of dumpsites that are unofficial and environmentally undesirable, contaminating the air, groundwater and soil nearby. The National Waste Strategy was adopted in 1996. Under the 1996 Law on Public Waste Disposal, the Ministry of Public Works is responsible for waste. Albania ratified the Basil Convention in 1999 but has yet to complete the legal framework for hazardous waste.

BIODIVERSITY: The Biological Institute of the University of Tirana estimates that 10% of the flora and 62% of the reptiles in Albania are rare or endangered. The Government protects 5.8% of the land (163,561 hectares) and owns 95% of the forests (about 40% is being transferred to municipal governments).¹²⁴ Deforestation is a concern but there has been no forest fund inventory since 1985 to measure its extent. The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan was adopted in 2000.

¹²² <http://www.rec.org/REC/Programs/REREP/>

¹²³ State of the Environment (SOE), Government of Albania, 2001.

¹²⁴ Institutional Capacities for Environmental Protection in Albania, UNEP, 2000. <http://balkans.unep.ch/albania/reports.html>

6.1.2 ANALYSIS

The dramatic decline in production early in Albania's transition slowed the output of pollution, but economic growth is recovering and certain neglected industrial sites continue to pose a hazard to health and the environment.¹²⁵ In spite of some inconsistencies in the law regarding jurisdiction, implementation of existing environmental legislation would be an adequate first step towards protecting the environment. This implies that capacity building for implementation, monitoring and enforcement should be an even stronger priority than promoting public awareness and developing new policies. Environmental issues often do not receive much more than token attention, so it is encouraging that the Prime Minister's Speech in 2001 raised the profile of environmental protection as a priority. The effective decentralization of control over waste management, wastewater, drinking water, nature protection and air pollution could strengthen implementation. Implementation of the NEAP is expected to cost about 250 million USD, whereas the budget of the Ministry of the Environment in 2002 is 0.5 million USD, indicating a need for substantial donor involvement.

EROSION: Erosion occurs because of natural reasons (three-quarters of Albanian land is hilly or mountainous, and rainfall is concentrated in the spring and fall) and human reasons (deforestation, the abandonment of land, the mismanagement and overgrazing of land,

UNEP has identified certain industrial "Hot Spots" for priority action

- Chemical Plant – Durres
 - Chloralkali and PVC Factory – Vlora
 - Marize Oil Field – Patos
 - Oil Refinery – Ballsh
 - Waste Disposal Site - Sharra
- Other industrial sites, lower priority:
- Nitrate Fertilizer Plant – Fier
 - Metallurgical Complex – Elbasan
 - Copper Factory – Rubik

Source: Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment – Albania. 2000. UNEP.

damage to irrigation and drainage networks, and the removal of gravel from riverbeds). FAO is implementing a pilot project to see what can be done to stop erosion and repair the damage.

AIR QUALITY: Air quality improved when industry collapsed in the early 1990s and when

households switched from coal to electricity for heating, but industry is returning. Domestic heating, oil extraction and refining, garbage burning, and cement production cause air pollution. The use of automobiles has risen substantially. The majority of cars are at least 10 years old and run on diesel. The government does not control fuel quality and does not have plans to phase out the use of leaded petrol.

WATER QUALITY: Waste from urban settlements and effluent/pollution from the oil, chemical, and mining industries are the main threats to water quality. The Government does not require industries to monitor their effluents. Wastewater is still discharged from the shore untreated in Albania, and sewage is not monitored. The 1996 Memorandum of Understanding for the Lake Ohrid Conservation Project with Macedonia, the Lake Ohrid Management Board, and the Lake Ohrid Watershed Management Committee are positive examples of regional cooperation for conservation and regulation.

UNEP Environmental Lessons from the 1999 Refugee Crisis

- Stronger coordination right from the start
- Plan refugee sites using Life Cycle Assessment to minimize rehabilitation costs and further local development
- Distribute environmental guidelines and procedures to all partners at the start
- More commitment to the rehabilitation of refugee sites
- Before a crisis prepare a list of potential sites with relatively low environmental sensitivity
- Buy food and materials with minimal environmental impact or that can be reused by the community after the crisis
- Ensure stored wastewaters do not seep into the groundwater
- Use Photopoint Monitoring to document environmental impact in each site

Source: Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment – Albania. 2000. UNEP.

WASTE MANAGEMENT: Almost half of the population lacks access to waste collection services. Often solid waste is dumped in sites that are unmanaged, illegal, burning, visited by animals and people, unrestricted access, and near water. There is a no system of managing industrial and hazardous waste,

¹²⁵ Many Albanian environmental documents: <http://www.grida.no/enrin/htmls/albania/reports/eng.htm>

therefore many tons of chemical and hazardous wastes and pesticides are stored around the country in unsafe and unmonitored locations. There is almost no system for managing waste from the health care system. Discarded batteries and used oils are not managed and recycling is undeveloped in Albania.

BIODIVERSITY: Biodiversity is threatened by deforestation and illegal logging, more frequent forest fires, increasing soil erosion, water and soil pollution from uncontrolled waste and sewage, illegal hunting, and the use of dynamite and drift nets for fishing. In order to cook and heat their homes, rural households rely on fuelwood for 68% of their energy needs in the winter and 53% in the summer. For rural heating needs in particular, fuelwood accounts for 79% of the total. An estimated 4.3 m³ of fuelwood was consumed by each rural household in 2000, for a total of 1.6 million m³. The amount of wood consumed each year by households, industry, and Government departments themselves, vastly exceeds the amount of wood official sold by license each year by the Government. Efforts are underway to strengthen the system of monitoring and enforcing regulations about illegal logging. This is a difficult and sensitive phenomenon to reduce, considering it is driven by both commercial motivations and by poverty/survival needs in rural communities.¹²⁶

6.1.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Government should continue to strengthen the role and status of environmental inspectors.
- Liability for environmental damage needs to be better specified and understood.
- Environmental concerns need to be incorporated into management decisions, through formal and informal mechanisms between ministries.
- Environmental databases need to be consolidated, published, and regularly updated.
- Implementation of the Aarhus Convention (the UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters¹²⁷), ratified by Albania in

June 2001, would simplify the legal and regulatory framework and strengthen interaction with the public.

- Urban planning for sustainable and healthy cities holds the key to the challenges posed by internal population movement and uncontrolled construction. The Government, the UN and other donors should follow up with campaigns such as the Aalborg Charter (Charter of European Cities & Towns Towards Sustainability¹²⁸).

6.2 Infrastructure & Basic Services

6.2.1 ASSESSMENT

Infrastructure is a critical issue in Albania's development. Inadequate basic services, transportation networks and energy supplies limit living standards, inhibit business, and discourage private investment. Tourism is a

- Hydropower is cheap and accounts for 95 per cent of all energy generation
- Eight major hydro-stations
- Total installed capacity (hydro and thermal power stations): 1,656 megawatts
- Total production: about 3.6 billion kilowatt hours (KWh)
- Estimated potential: 16 billion KWh per year
- The Government imports from Greece and Slovenia about one-third of electricity consumed
- A significant portion (about half) of electricity generated is not paid for
- Tariff collection is only about one-third, and much electricity is lost during transmission.
- Households consume one-third of electricity consumed

Source: Investment Profile 2001

prime example of a sector with huge growth potential that is delayed by insufficient infrastructure. Albania's strategic position along the Mediterranean in Southeast Europe is an opportunity for Albania to benefit from the interest of other countries in building the pan-European transport network. The Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe places major

¹²⁶ Illegal Logging Independent Study, ACER, October 2001.

¹²⁷ <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/>

¹²⁸ <http://www.sustainable-cities.org/about.html> includes an Albanian translation.

emphasis on infrastructure development in Albania. Much of the information in this section comes from "Investment Profile 2001: Albania" by the EBRD.¹²⁹

ENERGY: Albania is a net importer of energy, even though it has large hydroelectricity potential as well as reserves of oil, gas and coal. Currently Albania relies mostly on hydroelectricity for energy and exploits only about one-third of its hydroelectricity potential. Imports are costly to the Government and Albania has suffered severe chronic energy shortages in the winter since 2000. KESH, the Albanian Electricity Corporation, has difficulty financing operations and investment.

Shortages: The public first felt serious shortages in the winter of 2000. Despite the establishment of an energy task force in 1999, KESH remains in serious financial difficulties. In the winter customers in some cities are provided with electricity only for a few hours a day, the schedule is often changed without notice, and some cities are allotted a fixed amount of power and are cut off when it is depleted. Most electricity is generated in the North but little energy is distributed there during energy crises. In December 2001 electricity prices were raised presumably to bring prices closer to the real cost of providing electricity and to prepare KESH for privatization.

About one-third of the electricity consumed in Albania over the past few years was imported. In 2001 Albania generated 3650 GWh and imported 1750 GWh.¹³⁰ If the National Agency of Energy, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the World Bank are correct in their prediction that consumption will rise by 8.7% per year, then Albania will need 11.7 TWh per year by 2010.¹³¹ Few households use kerosene anymore, but fuelwood continues to be an important source of energy for cooking and heating in rural areas. Why does Albania have chronic energy shortages? What long-term strategy is required to fix the problem?

Measures taken so far

- The Government awarded the Italian Company, ENEL an 18 month contract to manage KESH
- The EBRD and World Bank are assisting in restructuring the sector by extending new loans to KESH in order to cut off illegal energy connections, cut off non-payers, encourage the public to be energy efficient, and reducing technical losses
- The EBRD is financing a project on emergency reconstruction of the distribution system and the hydropower generating capacity
- KESH is making efforts to install electricity meters for all customers and to computerize billing
- WB promised to finance a project constructing a Thermal Power Plant in Vlora, of 100 megawatt, with a value of 80 million USD.
- Municipalities are being asked to implement legislation requiring new constructions to have central heating.
- A Special Task Force was appointed by the Government with representatives from the main energy institutions, including KESH; an Action Plan and a National Strategy for the development of the Energy Sector exist
- Energy price reform has begun

Source: Ministry of Industry and Energy

TRANSPORT¹³²: The Public Investment Program of the Government of Albania contains medium and long-term plans for road, sea, air and railway transport. 90% of investment in transport goes to the road system. Albania's transport infrastructure consists of:

- (a) Road network of 2400 km of primary roads, 5000 km of secondary roads and 10900 km of tertiary roads. The General Roads Department is responsible for maintaining 3100 km, District Councils 14900 km, and Municipalities 1000 km.
- (b) Primary ports of Durres and Vlora, and minor ports at Saranda and Shengjini.
- (c) Rinas international airport between Tirana.
- (d) Rail network of 447 km of primary lines and 230 km of branch lines.

¹²⁹ 2001. <http://www.mac.doc.gov/EEBIC/Investmentprofile/Albania.pdf> or <http://www.ebrd.com/english/pubs/profiles/alba.pdf>

¹³⁰ Speech of Government representative to the Albania Power Sector Donors Meeting held in Brussels on April 4, 2002.

¹³¹ Investment Profile 2001: Albania, EBRD, 2001. <http://www.ebrd.com/english/pubs/profiles/alba.pdf>

¹³² Transportation data from: PIP 2002-2003, and direct communication with Ministry of Transport, 2001.

Except for a large decrease during the crisis of 1997, all forms of traffic have increased since 1990 aside from rail traffic. Measured in tons, transport rose 8.9% in 2000, with the fastest growth in marine transport. Railway transport is cheap but the network is in poor condition and some connections closed early in the transition. The connection with Montenegro resumed in 2002. Great importance is placed on the Port of Durres by the Stability Pact with investment including a USD 120 million container terminal. In 2000 air passenger traffic grew by 14.4%. See Table 33 Data on Transport and Telecommunication.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS: Telecommunications was the first infrastructure sector to be privatized, with the support of the major international financial institutions to promote transparency and development in the sector. Appropriate legislation and regulatory authority are in place. Nota-

Communications (AMC) was privatized in July 2000, and Vodaphone entered the market in 2001. Internet service is not yet reliable, and the cost of owning and operating a mobile phone is extremely high by European standards. Some international calls are relayed by microwave radio from the exchange in Tirana to Italy and Greece.

BASIC SERVICES: Existing infrastructure is overburdened. Investment in basic services and urban infrastructure has been very low during the transition, and maintenance and management has also been poor. This has led to a deterioration of existing infrastructure, and has not responded to the needs of people settling in un-serviced areas. About half of Tirana lacks any access or has completely inadequate access to basic services.

96.7% of the population had access to safe drinking water in 2000,¹³⁵ but another survey found that many household wells are

Basic infrastructure by poor & non-poor¹³⁴

	Urban		Rural		Total	
	Poor	Non-Poor	Poor	Non-Poor	Poor	Non-poor
No running water	24.5	23.4	31.4	34.7	29.9	29.6
No toilet	22.5	16.4	87.2	76.2	72.3	49.4
Rooms per person	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.7
Distance to services						
-- School	10.1	10.2	13.1	13.9	13.0	11.7
-- Work	19.6	18.6	21.4	20.9	20.4	20.6
-- Health Care	18.6	19.1	22.5	23.3	22.3	20.7

bly, the 2000 telecom law outlined minimum standards, licensing arrangements, and the allocation of radio frequencies. The provision of Internet and telephony service is fully liberalized.

In 2001 there were 15 Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and rural areas had telephony service from 10 private operators. State owned Albtelekom was established in 1992. Before then, most households were reliant on post offices for communication. The portion of households with a telephone is still low but growing; with fewer than 2 telephones per 100 inhabitants, Albania has the poorest telephone service in Europe.¹³³ Some villages lack a single telephone. Optic fiber links connect Albania with Kosovo, Macedonia, and Montenegro. There are two licensed mobile phone service providers: Albanian Mobile

contaminated with high levels of bacteria. About one-third of households lack running water, and many more households have running water only for certain hours in a day. Especially in urban areas, many families purchase water deposits/reservoirs so they can have running water when the supply is shut off, but these are reliant upon electric pumps. The disinfection of water supplies is often insufficient and in rural areas is often non-existent. Most of Albania's 50 operating water enterprises are subsidized by the state and provide insufficient service, and the Government recently decided to remove the limit on tariffs that could be charged by water enterprises. There are three drinking water plants. More than half of diarrhea cases are transmitted by water, indicating that sewage pipes often leak and infiltrate parallel water

¹³³ World Factbook 2001: Albania. CIA. 2001. <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/al.html>

¹³⁴ Results of Household Living Conditions Survey (LCS) October 1998, Instat, July 2001.

¹³⁵ Includes piped water, public tap, bore-hole/tube-well, protected well, and protected spring or rainwater. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), Instat, 2000.

pipes. Untreated sewage is discharged directly into the environment, and inadequate maintenance of sewage systems results in frequent blockages and back-ups. The National Water Strategy drafted in 1996 has not been adopted.

63% of Albanians own their house, and most of those have been living in the same house as they did before 1992. 95% of houses are privately owned, and 25% of families live in apartments that were privatized in 1992. The 8% of Albanians who inhabit their own house live in areas with less than 10,000 people. On average, Albanian households have two rooms with a living space of 62m² or 14.6m² per person.¹³⁶ Urban houses are built to poor construction standards and overcrowding is common. There is a severe shortage of houses (one estimate is that Albania has 11,000 homeless families). Public investment has permitted the construction of about 20,000 new housing units since 1993.

6.2.2 ANALYSIS

ENERGY: Bodies of water are the main source of electricity in Albania, making Albania very dependent on weather conditions (adequate rainfall and reservoir levels). On a typical day domestic Hydro Power Plants produce 5-8 million kWh/day. Combined with the 1.4 million produced by thermal power plants, total production falls far short of demand for power in the wintertime (about 16-27 Millions kWh per day). But the high cost of importing electricity is not the main cause of winter shortages; Albanian infrastructure connected to other countries can only transmit a maximum of 5 Million kWh/day. The bottleneck in technical capacity means that domestic supply and imported supply in the wintertime reach a maximum total of 10-14 Millions kWh/day, only about 40-50% of total wintertime demand.¹³⁷

All Balkan countries are experiencing difficulties in the electricity sector. Political crises and instability have kept public investment in new energy infrastructure well below the level needed to meet rapidly rising demand. In Albania a large portion of electricity consumers do not pay their bills, so rising electricity prices mainly affect good paying customers who are concentrated in

Tirana. The Government said the payment rate was about 58% in 2001, 20% short of the target in the energy strategy, and politicians have been unwilling to promote a crack-down on non-paying customers. The private sector cannot be expected to invest in energy in Albania until it becomes feasible to recover costs and make a profit.

KESH's state monopoly over electricity supply, vertically integrated, does not mesh with the unregulated private market for gas and other alternative sources of energy. The long-term subsidization of electricity prices over the years has artificially inflated demand by holding electricity prices below the cost of energy generated by other sources. This has discouraged consumers and investors from considering alternate sources. This price distortion needs to be changed without placing the burden on rural areas and the poor as part of a Government policy to seriously encourage and develop alternative sources.

TRANSPORT: In spite of new investment in transportation, much of Albania's 16,000-kilometer road network is in great need of rehabilitation and upgrading in order to accommodate rising traffic. Main priority has been given to the main east-west and north-south routes, but the northeast corridor in particular needs more attention. Donors must be cautious not to tolerate corruption in the implementation of road projects, which sometimes suffer undue delays and price raises, and should strive to gain commitment and involvement from local communities. Communities are important stakeholders, since poor or

Ongoing road projects have been given "Quick Start" status as priorities under the Stability Pact, such as:

- The 32 kilometer stretch of the north-south route from Lushnje to Fier
- The 35 kilometer stretch from Fier to Vlore
- The 24 kilometer stretch of the east-west route from Tepelene to Gjirokaster
- The 31 kilometer stretch from Elbasan to Librazhd
- Emergency repairs and pavement strengthening on a 221-kilometer stretch of the road from Durrës to Kukës, giving access to Kosovo

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Investment Profile 2001: Albania, EBRD, 2001. <http://www.ebrd.com/english/pubs/profiles/alba.pdf>

7 goals on the road to an information society

1. Set up telecommunications and computer networks;
2. Focus on group access not individual ownership;
3. Build human skills;
4. Put local views, news, and culture on the Web;
5. Adapt technology to local needs and constraints;
6. Devise Internet governance for diverse needs; and
7. Find innovative ways to fund communications projects.

Source: Human Development Report 2001, UNDP.

non-existent secondary and tertiary roads often prevent rural inhabitants from transporting their products and selling them in the ideal market. The competitiveness of Albania's highly important agriculture sector is at stake.

TELECOMMUNICATION: Telecommunication services at the beginning of the 1990s were unable to satisfy growing demand. Wire systems have grown obsolete, and early in the transition some inhabitants removed wiring from about 1,000 villages in order to construct fences, so not all villages have a telephone connection. Mobile phones are becoming increasingly popular but their price remains high, possibly due to insufficient competition in the sector. It may be worthwhile to consider granting licenses to new competitors and encouraging further investment in Albanian telecommunications systems.

BASIC SERVICES: Rapid migration to urban centers is increasing the number of people without access to basic services. Decentralization has the potential to improve this sector. Tariff levels and collection rates are low and many buildings have illegal connections to water supplies, so water enterprises have low revenues that cover operating expenses but do not allow for investment in increasing capacity. More attention needs to be paid to the regulating the sector and increasing the revenue of water enterprises to permit investment. Due to the lack of metering, most customers pay a flat rate for their water consumption, so consumers have no incentive to econ-

omize and limit their use of water. This results in higher demand for water than is necessary. The disinfection of water supplies with hypochlorite nitrate and calcium needs more attention. Most systems of chlorination in use are manual and do not guarantee the use of proper dosages. Investment in rural areas would be higher if strategies for rural water supplies and sanitation were finalized.

6.2.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Environmental sustainability and access for the poor should be guiding principles for infrastructure policies and investment.

ENERGY

The Strategic Action Plan for the energy sector recommends 51 specific actions. The three most important are:

- Improve the commercial operation of the electricity sector by reducing theft and improving collections
- Liberalize electricity prices
- Create a strong, independent electricity regulatory authority to implement an energy policy that balances the interests of companies participating in the electricity market and consumers.

Other key recommendations include:

- Restructuring KESH, separating production from transmission and dissemination
- Preparing the environment for the privatization of KESH
- Developing a comprehensive energy policy
- Improving electricity security and reliability
- Designing tariffs that encourage conservation
- Designing a modern, competitive electricity market.
- Increasing energy generation capacities, attracting strategic private investment.
- Connecting the Albanian electricity network into Balkan and European networks

TRANSPORT¹³⁸

- Rehabilitate existing transport infrastructure
- Ensure more adequate maintenance of primary, secondary and tertiary roads
- Develop regional transport links
- Establish a legislative regulatory and institutional framework
- Improve transport information systems and planning and management
- Promote private sector involvement in the development of transport infrastructure
- Increase cost recovery in the roads sector through appropriate pricing and taxation policies

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

- Further liberalize telecommunications, with the aim of lowering prices and increasing access, possibly by licensing another telecommunications operator, and by privatizing fixed telephone lines.
- In general, privatization should take place only when sufficient market structures and safeguards exist to prevent monopoly pricing. Privatization is pointless if the effect is to convert a public monopoly to an unregulated private monopoly.

- Seek to extend IT technology across the country and to business and education institutions.

BASIC SERVICES

- Expand basic services to rural areas.
- Upgrade networks of basic services in urban and peri-urban areas to adapt to the needs of an urbanizing population – legal access to land with services and infrastructure in a clean environment.
- Address the housing needs of poor and disadvantaged groups.
- Take measures to ensure water supplies that are regular and safe, such as by protecting water supplies from further contamination by environmental pollutants.
- Establish systems to treat and dispose of sewage with minimal damage to the environment.
- Improve the financial sustainability of water supply and sewage providers.
- Rehabilitate existing sewage networks.
- Decentralize investment and water supply management.
- Encourage private investment in the provision of basic services, in order to expand access, without penalizing the poor with prices they cannot afford.

¹³⁸ PIP 2000-2003; GPRS, November 2001.

7 Personal Security

Relevant UN Conventions and Conferences

- The International Convention against Torture
- Convention on the Prevention of Illicit Traffic of Narcotic Drugs
- Convention Against Organized Crime
- 2001 Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons

The Young Voices survey of children aged 9-13 found that: While the majority of children say they feel safe (65%) in their neighborhood, 31% state they feel rather unsafe or very unsafe. 11% of the children say they have been a victim of violence (mainly of physical violence). According to the 'Qualitative Assessment of Poverty' 35% of households report that a crime was committed against one or more family members within the previous year. 9% of households experienced a violent crime, 11% were robbed, and 5% suffered from vandalism.¹³⁹ The Prevalence of weapons in Albanian households is a destabilizing factor that facilitates threats to Personal Security.

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF THREATS TO PERSONAL SECURITY

- The State: Amnesty International¹⁴⁰ and Human Rights Watch¹⁴¹ have reported incidences of abuse by police. The Constitutional Court of Albania abolished the death penalty in 1999 to maintain membership in the Council of Europe.
- Other States: Albania has not been at war since the Second World War and other states are not considered a threat.

- Other ethnic groups: Ethnic Albanians in neighboring countries have been at war a number of times in recent years, but only refugees and no conflicts have spilled across the border.
- Other individuals or groups: This includes regular crime, street violence, organized crime and drug related crimes.
- Other families/clans: This is a serious concern in some communities such as Shkodra where blood feuds and a revived code known as the Kanun are followed instead of Government dispute resolution institutions. In 2001, 2,750 families were self-imprisoned at home and 900 children were prevented from attending school due to fear of revenge.¹⁴²
- Accidental injury or death: This includes threats such as workplace injuries, mined territory along the border with Kosovo (in 2001 22 people were killed and 222 injured by landmines¹⁴³), and traffic accidents.
- Abuse of women or children: These vulnerable groups are sometimes exploited in Albania for purposes of trafficking and prostitution.
- Self: Includes suicide and drug abuse.

Insecurity, deprivation and social exclusion can lead to fear, anger and despair, which can foster the desire to be armed or to exercise armed violence. Threat and exercise of armed violence undermines social, economic and political development. Programs that promote human security and human development, such as the UNDP program on weapon's surrendering in Gramsh,¹⁴⁴ can help break this vicious circle.

¹³⁹ Qualitative Assessment of Poverty in 10 Districts of Albania, WB and CESS, 2001. <http://www.minfin.gov.al/initiatives/gprs/documents/qualitative/qa.html>

¹⁴⁰ <http://web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/countries/albania>

¹⁴¹ <http://hrw.org/reports/world/albania-pubs.php>

¹⁴² Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2001: Albania, US State Department, March 2002. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2001/eur/8219pf.htm>

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Direct communication with UNDP Albania, 2002.

7.1 Organized Crime

7.1.1 ASSESSMENT

While the Ministry of Public Order acknowledges the existence of organized crime in Albania, it does not acknowledge the full extent of its consolidation and influence on politics and the media. Organized crime is recognized as a destabilizing force and its reduction is considered a priority. The Government promised in 2001 to do more to fight organized crime and smuggling operations through better training of prosecutors and police, stricter penal consequences, and the improvement of national coordination by establishing an Office Against Organized Crime. Coordinated by the Ministry of Finance, the 2000 Law on the Prevention of Money Laundering is being implemented very slowly.

Police seized hundreds of weapons from Albanians, Kosovars, Macedonians and Croats engaged in illegal arms trafficking in the first half of 2001. This trade has revived due to the conflicts in Kosovo and Macedonia. Over the same time period police reported 25 crimes considered terrorist, mostly attacks on the criminal police.

Albania is a country of origin for some drugs, for instance Albanians are involved in both the cultivation and production of Cannabis Sativa. Albania is a destination country for drugs including cocaine and heroin, and it is also a transit country for drugs on their way to Italy or Greece such as cocaine from the US and heroine from Turkey. The quantity of drugs confiscated (low overall) fluctuates since mobilization is sporadic; there are temporary spurts at the urging of influential members of the international community. Seizure statistics drastically understate the quantity of drugs used in and passing through Albania. Drug related offences are covered by provisions of the Criminal Law. In 2001 Albania was the final country in Europe to adhere to the 1961 and 1988 UN Conventions 'On the Prevention of the Illicit Trafficking of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances'. Albania is also expected to become a party to the 1971 Convention.

In 1998 the Central Service for the Fight against Drugs was founded with a head office under the MoPO and 12 regional offices. About 90 of the 100 positions for police and secret agents are filled, but the offices lack equipment and the officers lack professional training. In 2001 the Parliament approved the Law on the

Prevention of the Illegal Trafficking of Narcotics in Albania and on the Establishment of the Inter-ministerial Drug Control Committee.

7.1.2 ANALYSIS

Two crises in particular contributed to the growth of ordinary and organized criminal activity, especially in Shkodra, Vlora and Tropoja. These were the looting of kallashnikovs, bombs and heavy arms from army depots during the 1997 disorder following the collapse of the pyramid schemes, and the diversion of police away from regular duties during the 1999 refugee influx. Police eventually restored public order after each crisis but some parts of Northern Albania still remain outside of the effective control of the police. Criminal gangs have taken advantage of regional instability and domestic political crises to strengthen their grip on Albania.

The drug phenomenon appeared in Albania relatively recently due to the opening of borders and private control of land and business, and was fostered by factors such as poverty and incomplete legislation. The 2001 Law on the Prevention of Illegal Narcotics Trafficking has severe penalties, but there are enforcement problems due to the poor conditions and inadequate professional training of the police force. Other factors encouraging the drug trade include freer movement of people across borders after the end of Albania's isolation in the early 1990s, a climate appropriate for the cultivation of marijuana, poverty – especially in rural areas, and geographic position along an important trade route.

There is no national strategy for the fight against drugs, but the legal framework is mostly complete – what is missing are sub-legal acts to allow the implementation of the law on illegal trafficking of narcotics. Cultivation is becoming an important livelihood in some rural areas and UNDCP reports that Cannabis is grown in every Region of the country. It is a growing priority of the Government to combat drugs and crime in general, there is a need for better equipment, training, information sharing and cooperation.

While Albanian police cooperates with Italian coastal officials to control traffic across the Adriatic, there is a serious lack of cooperation between national agencies. For instance the border, street, and organized crime police should but do not collaborate to combat the illegal trafficking of human beings. These police along with the prosecution service and the

Drug Routes and Confiscations ¹⁴⁵		
	2000	2001
Cannabis Sativa eradicated	256,857 plants	281,730 plants 129 seizures
Papaver Somniferum eradicated	120 plants	
Processing laboratories destroyed	5	3
Heroin confiscated	51 kg	4 kg 526 grams. 69 number of seizures
Cocaine confiscated	4 kg	266 grams 3 seizures
Methadone confiscated	0.48 liters	1,320 liters 1 seizure
Hashish oil confiscated	3 liters	
Marijuana confiscated	7 tons	7 tons 117 seizures
Papaver seed confiscated		2 kg 828 grams
Cannabis seed confiscated		600 grams
Cash confiscated		1.1 million USD
Drug cultivation, distribution & trafficking offences	519	325 during 2001
Hotspots for cultivation	Vlora, Fier, Lushnje, Kavaja, Elbasan	
Source of heroin	Turkey via Bulgaria and Macedonia, passing customs at Qafe Thana, Blata, & Tushemisht	
Destination of heroin	Italy, through the ports of Vlora, Durres, & Saranda	
Source of cocaine	USA, & in a couple cases from Hungary, passing customs at Rinas airport, & from other countries through the ports	
Destination of cocaine	Flights to Germany, & Nordic countries	

courts need to collaborate in the fight against drugs.

7.1.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Improve co-operation between the Ministry of Public Order and the Prosecution Office.
- Move towards the coherence and unification of administrative and operational police procedures and Police Ethics Principles by adapting to Euro-Atlantic legislative models.
- Emphasize the implementation of international conventions and agreements to fight crime that Albania has already signed, followed by active participation in new initiatives.
- Strive to increase the level of trust and co-operation between civil society and public order institutions.
- Improve the coordination of inter-ministerial structures related to organized crime.
- Bring the fight against organized crime to the local level.

DRUG SUPPLY REDUCTION¹⁴⁶

- The national scope of the drug cultivation, trafficking and consumption problem suggests the need for both political will and greater capacity. This refers to: a) The willingness of political elements to make a concerted effort and devote the necessary resources, and the willingness of the police forces to look internally and disassociate themselves from members involved in drug related gangs and corruption. b) The international community should support the criminal police and the Anti Drug Unit in particular with professional training and equipment.
- Information should be exchanged between national and international agencies involved in investigating and controlling illegal trafficking in humans, drugs, and other smuggling.
- The judiciary and law enforcement officials should collaborate in order to arrest criminals and follow through with conviction and penalties.
- The curricula at the Police Academy should be revised to prepare officers to deal with the drug problem.

¹⁴⁵ Direct communication with UNDCP Albania, 2002.

¹⁴⁶ For more drug and crime statistics and policies, see <http://www.undcp.org>

7.2 Trafficking and Smuggling of People

7.2.1 DEFINITION

2000 Palermo Protocol Definitions

Trafficking in persons

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation

Smuggling of migrants

The procurement to obtain, directly, or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident

The use of the same word in Albanian for both trafficking and smuggling continues to confuse the issues, which must be dealt with in different ways since they have separate causes. The distinction was made for the first time in International Law with the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime and its two Protocols, signed in Palermo in September 2000, to which Albania is a party. The definitions of trafficking is given in article 3/a of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. The definition of smuggling is given in article 3/a of the Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air. According to the mentioned Protocols, the difference between smuggling and trafficking would be as follows:

- (a) Smuggling involves a client/service relationship between the smuggler and smuggled individual (commonly referred to as illegal migrants or clandestines) who desires to cross a border; while
- (b) Trafficking involves a property/ownership relationship where the trafficker has the power to buy, sell and abuse the person being illegally trafficked through coercion as if he/she were a product.

	No. of cases	No. of arrests	No. of prosecutions	Criminal gangs identified/ caught	Victims apprehended/ weapons seized
Children	3		4		5
Women (IOM/ ICMC cases for 2000)	117	181	13 criminal gangs for penal prosecution		117 (43 foreigners, 15% were minors)
Smuggled illegal migrants	73	145		13	69 passenger & 9 transport vehicles
Vehicle	8		72		112 cars blocked
Weapon	18	29		3	Rockets & sharpshooters

7.2.2 ASSESSMENT

Albania is a source and transit country for both trafficked and smuggled individuals. Trafficking victims, usually women and children, originate mainly from Albania, Moldova, Romania, Ukraine, Russia, Bulgaria, Kosovo, China, and Kurdistan. Most of them are destined for Italy, Greece and Western Europe. The trend has seen a slight decrease of victims from Albania, and some former victims are being returned to Albania. However, there has been an increase in the recruitment of foreign women, primarily Moldovan and Romanian. Smuggled individuals usually enter Albania through Macedonia, Greece, Montenegro or Rinas airport. In the first half of 2001 police seized 2,172 persons, mainly Kurds.¹⁴⁸ No reliable estimates exist for the number of illegal emigrants per year, or the number of women or children illegally trafficked per year, or the totals of these who are currently living abroad. The Ministry of Public Order (MoPO) estimates that 4000 Albanian youth aged 0-18 were trafficked between 1992 and 2000. Estimates by Albanian NGOs of the number of trafficked women and children working in Italy and Greece are much higher.

The MoPO has jurisdiction over smuggling and trafficking. Much of the emphasis of police efforts are on blocking illegal emigrants along the border and returning them to their country of origin, and patrolling the coastline to seize boats used for smuggling or trafficking individuals.

The MoPO helped set up the Vlora Anti-Trafficking Center in October 2001 with International support to combat the smuggling of clandestines/illegal migrants and the trafficking of human beings. This Center is not

¹⁴⁷ Direct communication with MoPO, 2001.

¹⁴⁸ UNDCP Semi-Annual Report, 2001.

yet fully operational. The employees of the Center have high turnover and the future of the Center is uncertain since its objectives are unclear and its continuation will depend on the impact it demonstrates. Albania is a member of the Stability Pact Initiative against Organized Crime (SPOC) and passed the National Strategy for Trafficking in 2001 after much pressure and lobbying. In December 2001 Albania signed an agreement to combat trafficking and smuggling with the 8 other Balkan country members of the Southeast Europe Cooperation Process (SEECp). This agreement deals with the establishment of the Police Association of Southeast European Countries, the repatriation of clandestines/illegal migrants, the exchange of information, and collaboration in criminal investigations.

7.2.3 ANALYSIS

Trafficking and smuggling are criminal, economic, social, and gender problems. Smuggling is primarily a problem for the destination country, which wants to keep the clandestines/illegal migrants out. Trafficking is first and foremost a problem for the victims themselves (they tend to be trapped and treated with violence, have their identification papers stolen, be shunned by their family if they return, etc.), but also for all source, transit and destination countries, since trafficking also deals with arms and drugs and raises the danger of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as HIV/AIDS.

In general the media and Government lack professionalism in dealing with trafficking, as shown by the publication in 2001 of the location of a women's shelter, which placed the women inside at risk of violence. The media also tend to contribute to the victimization and stereotyping of women involved in trafficking, and they tend to link traffickers with the police in a general way without proof of reference to specific instances, leading people to believe the phenomenon is unstoppable. It is very positive that a Government strategy and structure does exist for the problem of trafficking, and that the Government has become much more open to NGOs, especially when NGOs come forward with offers rather than demands.

The smuggling client is often motivated by the same factors as regular internal or external migrants, including a desire or need

to take advantage of good or more adequate opportunities elsewhere. See the section on Migration. The smugglers themselves are motivated by the profit they can earn by providing the transit service.

Trafficking is often motivated by a desire to profit from sexual or other exploitation of the victims. Usually it is a friend or boyfriend who is connected to organized crime that recruits the girl, sometimes on the premise of marriage with the permission of the parents, or other forms of deception such as the offer of job abroad. Prostitution is illegal in Albania, but as with many crimes it is important to distinguish between people who voluntarily choose prostitution for economic motives and people who are forced into prostitution. Most of the girls are forced into prostitution but some choose prostitution for economic motives under the mistaken impression that they can go by themselves and work for 6 months or 1 year and then return with money. Whether the initial decision is voluntary or not, the outcome tends to be the same for the women and girls. Prostitutes still tend to be arrested and persecuted more often than traffickers, pimps and johns, suggesting the need for a change in mentalities, the possible involvement of some state officials in trafficking, and the need for proper law enforcement by the police and judiciary.

The trafficking of minors is usually driven by the potential to profit from pedophilia, the sexual exploitation of children. Minor girls in particular are highly profitable. Some children are trafficked and forced to become beggars or slaves, while others are used for the trafficking of organs, but there is no reliable data on this. The most common child victims are children from divorced families with little family care, children from families with many children, children from poor families, children born out of wedlock, children who live in villages, children who were orphaned when their parents emigrated for work, children who have dropped out of school, children who have been beggars, and children who have performed other illegal activities in Albania.

The MoPO has a National Strategy of Trafficking that will last until September 2004 and partly covers children, aiming to stop the trafficking of children and enable their reintegration into society. The strategy entails strict persecution of traffickers, fostering employment and business opportunities, developing cultural and sport activities, raising public awareness, offering medical and psychologi-

cal aid, and creating rehabilitation centers. The penalties for child trafficking range from 10 years imprisonment to life in prison if the child dies.

Trafficking and smuggling activity often involves speedboats to cross the Adriatic and reach Italy undetected and avoid the customs controls of both countries. Insufficient documentation also facilitates trafficking and smuggling since it makes the activities more difficult to detect and control. Trafficking rings network with each other in the search for new victims to traffic. Traffickers and those who act as the owners of the victims often have systems in place that make it difficult or dangerous for victims to escape their exploitation. They also rely on physical and psychological harm, and debt bondage leading to slavery like conditions.

The West's policy of refusing entry to Albanians and other Eastern Europeans has raised much criticism, since this strict control of border points fuels the demand for smuggling services and hence organized crime. Once these organized crime groups are established, they often progress from smuggling persons to smuggling guns, drugs, and trafficking people to meet the huge demand in the sex industry in Western European countries. In this way closed borders force and encourage some people to resort to smuggling which indirectly fosters the trafficking phenomenon.

Albania has not lived up to its commitments and the requests of neighboring countries to seriously combat trafficking. It has taken some steps but the Government continues to lack genuine commitment to reduce trafficking, help the victims, and remove corrupt officials involved. Albania's 2001 strategy on trafficking in human beings identifies the following weak points: shortcomings in border control, the presence of some corrupt officials, insufficient training of prosecutors and police, the shortage of centers to accommodate foreign and Albanian victims, insufficient technical means to effectively combat trafficking, the necessity to improve the legal framework of witness protection and criminal procedures, and insufficient education and public awareness on the risks of trafficking.

Trafficking and smuggling are rising on the political agenda but there is not a corresponding professional capacity to act. Albania's strategy calls for studies to be performed in 2002, the

adoption of legislation on witness protection, the promotion of public awareness, the creation of education campaigns that target women and children, drafting programs to improve the social conditions of women and girls, repatriation and treatment/rehabilitation services for victims, training of public law and order officials, and the creation and outfitting of a specialized law enforcement unit. There is strong interest in trafficking from both Albanian and international NGOs, and interest is rising among local NGOs but their capacity is low.

7.2.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

- More programs should be regional rather than country based.
- The UN should lobby receiving countries to develop measures to protect children who are trafficked from deportation, along the lines of the UNHCR¹⁴⁹ Guidelines on the Repatriation of Minors, possibly under the EU or Stability Pact.
- The Government needs to do more to protect returned victims and to refer them to existing services provided by the International Organization for Migration¹⁵⁰ (IOM) and the International Catholic Migration Commission¹⁵¹ (ICMC).
- Governmental, Intergovernmental, and NGO efforts need to be coordinated to avoid duplication and to work in their areas of strength. For instance NGOs may be able to run a shelter better than a police station could, due to the gender issues, masculinity and poor interpersonal skills of the police. Eventually the skills of the police could be built up so they could perform such roles well.
- The international community can support efforts to prosecute trafficking rings by providing resettlement opportunities for witnesses, since witness protection is unrealistic in a small country like Albania.
- The UN system could support programs to lessen the social stigma faced by all prostitutes regardless of cause, to foster awareness of ways to migrate legally and promote the expansion of such opportunities, to offer technical assistance to agencies researching and combating trafficking and smuggling, to actively promote an

¹⁴⁹ <http://www.unhcr.ch/>

¹⁵⁰ <http://www.iom.int/>

¹⁵¹ <http://www.icmc.net>

effective implementation of the international legislation on providing protection in such cases, to promote a clearer distinction in the Government and other actors between the concepts of smuggling and trafficking and the means of fighting them, and to discourage trafficking through better dissemination of information on the risks of being trafficked.

- The UN and its partners should continue to push initiatives to provide protection and asylum, treatment, accommodation, and rehabilitation to victims, and to match each individual victim with the appropriate services. Trafficking victims need to be considered as people whose fundamental rights have been violated; their protection should be considered not as assistance but as protection of their rights.
- In general, the vulnerable groups of women and children identified could benefit from education, empowerment, and other measures to improve their situation.
- Better use should be made of existing local expertise, and local NGOs need more support and capacity building.
- The UN should encourage local NGOs aspiring to be active in the field by building their capacity, while ensuring that minimum standards for shelter management and facilities are well understood and respected by these NGOs.

7.3 Proliferation of Small Arms

7.3.1 ASSESSMENT

The widespread availability and use of small arms and light weapons in Albania has its roots in the turmoil of March-April 1997, which was sparked by the collapse of pyramid investment schemes in which many Albanians had invested their life savings. The civil unrest that ensued targeted government and other state institutions, culminating in the massive looting of military barracks, installations, weapons and ammunition depots. Albanian government sources report that in all, approximately 550,000 weapons were stolen, together with 20,000 tons of explosives and 1.5 billion bullets and artillery shells. Amnesty International reported in 1998 that approximately 1,600 people had been killed. During that time the Government lost control over most of the country; lawlessness,

crime and insecurity prevailed.

After the end of the crisis in mid-1997, leading to general elections, the Government declared an amnesty for those who returned the weapons, to begin to deal with problem of heavily armed civilians. Some weapons and ammunition were retrieved however, the figure remained low in comparison with the number of weapons lost, representing officially only ten percent of the total at the end of 1997. The absence of law and order in some parts of the territory contributed to illegal weapons trafficking out of Albania, at least in the immediate post-crisis period.

On 7 February 1998, the Government officially requested UN assistance to give a new impetus to the voluntary surrender of arms and to benefit from UN experience with disarmament in other countries. A mission led by the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs visited Albania in June 1998 and recommended linking weapons collection programs with development incentives benefiting communities as a whole, leading to the Gramsh Pilot Project (GPP).

In August 1998, the Government of Albania passed a new and comprehensive law "On the collection of weapons and military ammunitions" to identify the types of weapons permissible for private ownership by civilians, along with clearly defined measures against their misuse. It established a two-year voluntary phase of weapons surrender, later extended until August 2002, followed by a compulsory phase thereafter. The Government introduced a nation-wide Weapons Control Program (WCP) in February 2000 in response to the success of the GPP.

The Albanian authorities have also addressed the issue of destroying surplus weapons. Under the Stability Pact, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed in September 2000 between the governments of Germany, Norway and the United States, specifying responsibilities for destroying Albanian surplus weapons. The Government met the target of destroying around 100,000 weapons from its collection program in September 2001, and a total of. In 2002 the Armed Forces also completed destruction of their stockpile of over 1,600,000 anti-personnel mines in 2002.

The achievements in retrieving weapons and ammunition reflect the tremendous national

efforts made to-date. It is estimated that over one third of the weapons were collected and that less than a third were smuggled out of the country since 1997. However, the continued presence in the hands of civilians of approximately one third of the weapons lost in 1997 poses an immediate threat to public order and human security. This is a challenge that needs to be addressed now, since the application of the amnesty law will expire in August 2002 and possession of arms after the deadline will be considered a crime.

7.3.2 ANALYSIS

Although the weapons themselves do not cause the conflicts in which they are used, their proliferation and easy availability exacerbate the degree of violence by increasing the lethality and duration of hostilities, and encouraging violent rather than peaceful resolutions of differences. The resultant culture of violence obstructs peace-building and the launching of economic and social recovery in post-war societies. Without appropriate disarmament – involving the collection of residual small arms and the storage of state-owned weapons in protected areas – programs for national rehabilitation and development cannot be sustained.

For Albania, the illegal possession of a considerable number of weapons still in the hands of the civilians is one of the major deterrents to the Government's goal of restoring public order, since it is a significant factor in worsening human security and social relationships and it inhibits economic and social recovery as the country is unable to attract much needed external funds. This fact, combined with the existence of organized crime and widespread corruption and trafficking, amplifies the threats and creates a glaring need for Albania and its partners to address these challenges.

Assistance provided by the UN system with regard to light weapons has found a niche and gained momentum in the framework of Albania's development challenges and matches well with the current Albanian and regional security priorities. The UN has gained considerable experience in dealing with light weapons as part of peace operations, and through its inquiries into illicit arms acquisitions. In the United Nations Millennium Declaration, adopted at the Millennium Summit (6-8 September 2000) in New York, Member States resolved to "take

concerted action to end illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons, especially by making transfers more transparent and supporting regional disarmament measures, taking into account of all recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons".

Mandated by General Assembly Resolutions 50/70 B and 52/38 J to address the problem of small arms and light weapons, the UN has delineated five mutually supportive objectives, which are applicable to the Albanian context:

- To retain the lead in putting the issue of small arms on the global agenda by projecting itself as a catalyst, and a clearing house for different initiatives
- To assume a coordinating role in channeling the growing international concern about small arms into realistic and attainable goals
- To encourage widespread involvement of civil society in building societal resistance to the illegitimate use of small arms and light weapons
- To strengthen the UN's ability to respond speedily and effectively to requests for assistance by areas affected by light weapons and their illicit traffic
- To ensure that the above objectives are pursued within the framework of the UN's objectives in the field of disarmament

7.3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

(Drawn from the Regional Workshop on Human Security and Weapons Control in South Eastern European Countries organized by UNDP Albania, 4-5 April 2002)

WEAPONS CONTROL AND REDUCTION

- It is necessary to both collect and destroy illegal weapons and to control the possession and movement of weapons. Weapons reduction and control must be pursued simultaneously. If one only collects weapons without controlling their sources, this will not produce durable and sustainable benefits. In this vein, it is critical that weapons production in the region is strictly curtailed and monitored. The imposition of a moratorium on arms production is a strategy that should be considered carefully.

- Governments need to review the laws that govern the possession, movement and use of firearms to see whether new legislation is needed to institute more effective weapons control.
- They also need to review their agencies to see whether reforms or new bodies are needed for effective weapons control. For instance, there is a need for a computerized national registry of legalized weapons held by private persons, and a need for safe, secure and transparent management of government stocks.
- To implement weapons control, governments need to augment and enhance the training and equipment of law enforcement officials.
- The media, civil society and the population at large should provide critical support to governments in their efforts at weapons control.

MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC ORDER, RULE OF LAW AND PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES

- An adequate level of public order is essential to weapons control and human security. This is a government responsibility, specifically the duty of police forces, supported by border control officials and other law enforcement personnel.
- Measures to enhance good governance, transparency and accountability, will benefit human security and weapons control as they reassure law-abiding citizens that their protection is assured and deter others from breaking weapons laws.
- Representative elected bodies are the best forum for the peaceful settlement of political conflicts. Measures to enhance their effectiveness will be in the interest of human security and weapons control.
- A fair, independent and effective judiciary is the best channel for the settlement of private and communal disputes and plays a key role in preventing private persons from taking the law into their own hands.
- The application of legal penalties must adhere to the law and be fair and humane, but strict.

CAPACITY-BUILDING

- The measures and initiatives proposed here require governments and civil society to play a more active and effective role in the promotion of weapons control and human security. In many cases, they will need to improve and expand their capacity to confront these issues. Governments need to make laws, create agencies, train personnel, purchase equipment and institute administrative measures to be able to effectively control weapons. While most countries of this region have a legal framework and the basic administrative machinery for this purpose, their effectiveness is impeded by a lack of training, equipment and funds. This needs to be remedied.
- Similarly, civil society needs to enhance its capacity to confront the problems of weapons proliferation and insecurity. Measures to empower and train the members of non-governmental organizations and representatives of the media to tackle these issues in a more informed and effective fashion is needed.
- The international community should actively support such capacity-building efforts in government and civil society by providing encouragement, expertise and funds, but the potential recipients must clearly define their needs and priorities.

REGIONAL CO-OPERATION

- **Sharing Facilities:** The countries of the region should seek to share facilities like plants for the destruction of surplus ordnance, training centers etc.
- **Sharing Information:** Further study into the problems of weapons and insecurity is needed and needs to be undertaken at the local, national and regional level. The Regional Clearinghouse will serve as a forum for the exchange of information and expertise thus it needs to be actively used.
- **Co-ordination:** It is difficult but desirable for the countries of the region to attempt to harmonize their laws and enforcement policies in the area of weapons control. This will help prevent smugglers and terrorists from using one country as a safe haven or base for criminal activities in another country of the region.

7.4 Asylum System

7.4.1 DEFINITION

The 1951 Convention on Status of Refugees (CSR) defines a refugee as “a person who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside of his/her country and is unable or unwilling to avail himself/herself of the protection of that country”. The Albanian Asylum Law acknowledges the same definition. At the same time it created two additional categories of asylum: Temporary Protection on Humanitarian Grounds, and Temporary Protection in Cases of Mass-influx. Over the years, several General Assembly Resolutions, endorsed by the international community, have requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees’ involvement with persons who are outside their country of origin because of persecution, armed conflict, or generalized violence leading to flight.

Refugees in Albania enjoy, according to Article 12 of the Asylum Law, the legal status provided for in the 1951 CSR and its 1967 Protocol, all rights stipulated in other relevant international treaties the Republic of Albania is a Party to, as well as the rights granted to foreigners in general by Albanian legislation. Persons granted Temporary Protection enjoy the same rights as refugees, except that of a travel document in the case of those granted protection on humanitarian grounds. For those in a mass-influx, their rights can be restricted according to legitimate public concerns for a maximum of three years.

7.4.2 ASSESSMENT

Asylum became a reality in Albania for the first time during the Kosovo crises of 1998 and 1999 when about 465,000 Kosovars were granted protection in Albania, most of whom have since returned.

As of the beginning of 2002, there are about 300 recognized refugees and 40 asylum seekers remaining in Albania. Most of them are Kosovar, but there are also about 50 Macedonian Albanians and a smaller number of Iraqis, Turkish Kurds and others. The demographic profile of the refugee population corresponds to normal comprising 50% females.

In response to the rising flow of irregular migrants through Albania, UNHCR has developed the Three-Pronged approach to

address the composite parts of the irregular migration phenomenon. The Three-Pronged approach, as envisaged by UNHCR BO Tirana, views irregular migration through Albania as being composite in nature - there are three interrelated although independent systems for persons part of the illegal flow: persons in need of international protection (asylum seekers/refugees), economic migrants and trafficked persons for sexual labor exploitation respectively. Each category of persons should have access to the right referral system, which aim to achieve durable/permanent solutions including return of origin or local integration for those who merit it according to Albanian and international law. The Government has approved the implementation of an inter-agency pre-screening system (see box) using the Three-Pronged approach.

Pre-screening System

Proper referral services and reception facilities for asylum seekers are cornerstones of a functioning asylum system. The pre-screening system is in close connection with the three pronged approach. Upon notification by the police in case of apprehended foreigners for illegal entry in Albania, the pre-screening team (composed by the Albanian Office for Refugees, UNHCR or ICMC/IOM for trafficked women) interviews and refers these foreigners to the right systems: foreigners (including trafficked woman) who voluntarily want to go back to their country of origin are assisted and taken by IOM/ICMC; persons seeking asylum are referred to the Office for Refugees to start the asylum procedure and the reception centres available; others are subject to the normal legal procedures for foreigners who illegally enter the country.

The situation of refugees in Albania is not problematic in numerical terms, but the level of compliance with international standards on asylum, which are largely incorporated into the Law on Asylum, is an important indicator of respect for human rights. The rights of refugees in Albania are overall respected, albeit are more difficult to be exercised by non-ethnic Albanian refugees. Albania’s poor social, political and economic security, minimal infrastructure and weak administration make local integration of refugees largely not realistic. The circumstances led to relatively few refugees remaining in the country, and those who do heavily depend upon UNHCR-funded assistance.

One of the main asylum-related challenges in Albania is creating possibilities for the local integration of persons granted asylum.

In order to fill this important gap, two local NGOs prepared a Draft Decision on the Local Integration of Persons Granted Asylum in Albania, which was endorsed by the Task Force (see below). After approval from the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Finance, the Decision is expected to be approved by the Council of Ministers in 2002. This decision further completes the legal framework of asylum, ensuring the rights of persons granted asylum, such as the right to education and to work, social assistance, health care and housing.

7.4.3 ANALYSIS

The Government is responsible for the protection of and assistance to refugees while UNHCR advises on and supervises the country's adherence to the principles of international protection and monitors the Refugee Status Determination procedure. Whereas refugees' rights and benefits as recognized by the Albanian Law, much remains to be done to make these rights a reality for refugees in Albania. In a country facing considerable economic difficulties, the lack of resources and administrative capacity makes it necessary for the time being for UNHCR and partners to intervene.

Importantly the Government formally declared the implementation of the asylum system as one of its priorities in the process of Stabilization and Association with the EU. Following the reshuffle of cabinet, the Council of Ministers created in October 2001 the long awaited Task Force for the Implementation of the Asylum System. This body comprises representatives of seven ministries, UNHCR, three specialized NGOs and three international organizations as observers. Its objective is two-fold: improvement of the asylum legal framework, and improvement of the institutional capacity and skills, notably through training of State authorities called to implement the asylum legislation.

The work of the Task Force is guided by the National Asylum Action Plan, based on the Gap

Analysis conducted in 1999-2000. This Plan was drafted by UNHCR in conjunction with the Government, and endorsed by the Task Force. It is expected that the Task Force be streamlined into the SP Migration and Asylum Initiative, once it is launched in Albania.

International attention to asylum related matters in Albania is increasing. Several international initiatives have a direct effect on the development and implementation of a framework on asylum and migration in Albania, including among others the Stabilization and Association Process, the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, the EU High Level Working Group on Asylum and Migration, and the Friends of Albania group. These international initiatives help in setting standards in the field of asylum and assist the Government of Albania to approach these standards.

7.4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

- UNHCR, the Government of Albania, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations should fully implement the pre-screening procedure with the aim of providing protection and assistance to asylum seekers, trafficked persons, and migrants in a comprehensive approach. The pre-screening should be extended to the entire territory of Albania, including border points.
- Secondary legislation notably in the area of local integration needs to be endorsed by the Government of Albania to permit recognized refugees to enjoy their social and human rights.
- Government officials who enter into contact with refugees and asylum seekers (Office for Refugees of MoLPD, border and public order police, local authorities, officials from MoH, MoLSA, MoES, MoJ) have to be trained in asylum legislation and its application.
- The Office for Refugees (MoLPD) should increasingly take responsibility for the protection and welfare of persons granted asylum in Albania. To that end, it has to be firmly re-integrated into the MoLPD and its staff trained notably in refugee status determination and management of the reception facility for asylum seekers.

8

Political Security

Relevant UN Conventions
and other Documents

- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- European Charter of Human Rights
- 1998 Constitution of Albania

Political Security is freedom from fear of state repression and violation of basic human rights.¹⁵² The threat tends to be higher in times of political unrest and instability, which Albania experienced last in 1997-98, symptomatic of Albania's chronically weak state. Political Insecurity can easily undermine the other dimensions of Human Security.

To better guarantee Political Security it is necessary to ensure the responsible performance of numerous institutions and sectors in society: people need to be able to count upon a competent and corruption free Civil Service and Public Administration; people need to be able to hold Governments and each other accountable through effective electoral and judicial procedures; people need access to independent information and advocacy through the media and Civil Society as a balance to Government power; and people need a Government which is sufficiently decentralized to be responsive to their needs and the needs of their community. An overall contribution to political security would be the fostering of a cooperative rather than a conflicting political environment. This Chapter discusses the fight against corruption and the need to strengthen institutions.

8.1 Corruption

8.1.1 DEFINITION

Corruption falls within the definition of economic crime used by the Department of Economic Crime under the Ministry of Public Order (MoPO). Some forms of corruption are considered a criminal offence in Albania, including trading in influence and the active or passive bribery of domestic public officials. It is useful to distinguish low-level petty corruption (such as bribery to shorten official processing time) from high-level corruption (which is motivated more by greed than economic need and insecurity), since the causes and solutions tend to differ. Corruption exists in many forms besides bribery, such as theft of state property, abuse of 'in-kind' compensation, and abuse of the 'tender' process for public procurement and privatization.

Ministries & Central Institutions
Measures Jan.-Oct. 2001¹⁵³

Disciplinary Measures	1075
- "reprimand"	54
- "reprimand with warning"	365
- "removal from duty"	58
- "removal from work"	282
- "reduction in pay"	119
- "transfer"	89
- "other measures"	103
- "suspensions of the right to be promoted"	5
Administrative Measures (fines)	984
Number of Criminal Denunciations	109

8.1.2 ASSESSMENT

Corruption in Albania is costly to individuals and hinders the development of the country.¹⁵⁴ The World Bank states that empirical survey results in the region "provide a startling picture of systemic corruption that hurts public welfare,

¹⁵² To receive daily updates on human rights in the Balkans, send an email to: balkanhr-subscribe@egroups.com; or visit <http://www.greekhelsinki.gr>

¹⁵³ Ad Hoc Report, ACMG, November 2001.

¹⁵⁴ For a wealth of information on corruption in Albania see: http://www.nobribes.org/rc_albania.htm

taxes private sector activity, and is deeply institutionalized.”¹⁵⁵ A series of corruption surveys have transformed and focused the policy debate on country-specific priorities, beginning with a

Perceptions: % of Albanian respondents who said “nearly all” or “most” of the following groups are involved in corruption ¹⁵⁷	
Customs officers	86.6
Tax officials	79.0
Doctors	71.6
Lawyers	70.6
Municipal officials	69.1
Ministers	67.8
Officials at ministries	66.2
Administration officials in the judicial system	63.0
Members of parliament	61.8
Police officers	56.4
Municipal councilors	55.2
Political party & coalition leaders	54.7
Investigating officers	52.7
Local political leaders	49.6
University professors & officials	46.0
Business people	42.6
Bankers	24.4
Representatives of NGOs	23.1
Journalists	18.8
Teachers	11.6

survey¹⁵⁶ that highlighted the pervasive corruption in the judiciary. This survey also found that 53% of firms would be willing to pay higher taxes if corruption were eliminated, and estimated the cost of corruption as equivalent to 7% of revenue for firms that admitted to paying bribes.

Almost half of Albanian firms polled in a later survey¹⁵⁸ reported bribing public officials to get around taxes and regulations. A smaller portion reported buying the decisions of courts and arbitrage commissions, parliamentary votes, and presidential decrees. The report categorized Albania as a country with medium “State Capture”¹⁵⁹ (indicating insufficient accountability¹⁶⁰) and high “Administrative Corruption”¹⁶¹ (indicating low capability¹⁶²). The table of disciplinary and other measures taken by central Governmental institutions and

Ministries reveals that actions are indeed being taken to punish known offenders, up to and including removal from work and the laying of criminal charges. Supporting the legal and institutional framework are the activities of organizations including Friends of Albania, ACAC,¹⁶³ and Management Systems International.

As this table from a survey in 2001 shows, not all sectors of the economy and branches of the Government are equally perceived to be affected by corruption. One of the most problematic areas is health care, where most Albanians know they are expected to pay an informal fee for services that are officially free. In some positions of the public administration, such as customs control, it has been common for a job applicant to pay the hiring person for the new position.

Out of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania, and Yugoslavia, which were surveyed in the same report, Albanian respondents had the highest level of:

- pressure on citizens from public officials soliciting corrupt compensation;
- tolerance in principle of corruption;
- involvement in corrupt practices, and;
- pessimism over their country’s ability to deal with corruption, still within the range of moderate pessimism. Albanian respondents also had the second highest level of:
 - perception of pervasiveness of corruption among public sector employees;
 - willingness to compromise anti-corruption values in practical situations, and;
 - perception that corruption is becoming an effective means of solving private problems.¹⁶⁴

8.1.3 ANALYSIS

Not unique to Albania, corruption also occurs in other transition countries. Immediate causes of corruption are desires to exploit power for

¹⁵⁵ New Frontiers, WB, 1998.

¹⁵⁶ Albanian Empirical Report, WB and ACER, 1998.

¹⁵⁷ Corruption Indexes, March 2001. A nationally representative sample of 1001 Albanians aged 18 and over, face to face interviews, fieldwork Sept 2000 – Feb 2001. http://www.seldi.net/seldi_e.htm

¹⁵⁸ A 1999 Survey of Business Environment and Enterprise Performance in 22 countries by WB & EBRD, Analyzed in: Anti-Corruption Measures in South-Eastern Europe - Country Reviews and Priorities for Reform. September 2001. Stability Pact Anti-Corruption Initiative (SPAI).

¹⁵⁹ The ability of people to influence government policy formulation in their favor through bribery.

¹⁶⁰ The ability of citizens to hold public officials responsible for turning their preferences into results, through the electoral system, power-sharing with minorities, civil society involvement, and decentralized decision-making.

¹⁶¹ The degree to which the implementation of existing policies are influenced by the payment of bribes to public officials.

¹⁶² The capacity of government to provide citizens with basic social and regulatory services, high when management tools such as the budget or professional ethics standards are taken seriously.

¹⁶³ Albanian Coalition Against Corruption <http://www.acac.info/>

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

Legal & Institutional Framework

- Political corruptions was considered a crime under the 1992 Criminal Code, but this definition was inadequate and ineffective. The Criminal Code revised in 1995 improved the legal framework for combating corruption with relevant Articles on public employees, the judiciary, state contributions, benefiting from interests, public bids, kickbacks, bribes, and election campaigns.
- 1995 Law on the Declaration of Assets Owned by Elected Officials and Some Managers and Civil Servants. This information is not yet well maintained or used by the Prosecution Service.
- 1996 Criminal Procedure Code
- 1996 Civil Service Act
- The Code of Administrative Procedures
- The Law on Administrative Offences
- 1998 Budget Law
- 1998 Government Anti-Corruption Strategy, updated in 2000, under revision in 2002
- 1998 Law on the Organisation and Functioning of the Judiciary
- 1999 Law on the Status of the Civil Servant: involves transparent recruitment (to discourage the practice of paying for desirable positions), and promotion based on seniority and merit (which also improves job security, conditions where a civil servant can be legitimately dismissed, and principles of professionalism).
- 2000 Law on Judicial Police
- 2000 Law on the Creation of the Financial Police
- 2000 Law on the Organisation and Functioning of the Ministry of Justice
- 2001 Law on the Organisation and Functioning of the Bailiff Service
- 2001 Law on the Organisation and Functioning of the Prosecution Office
- Civil Service Commission – promotes recruitment procedures and job security.
- Judicial inspectorate of the High Council of Justice
- Albania has set up specialized anti-corruption services, such as the Section on Economic and Financial Crime under the Ministry of Public Order, which includes the Unit of the Fight against Theft and Fraud/Falsification, the Unit of the Fight against Financial Crimes and Money Laundering, and the Unit of the Fight against Corruption. The Section also has a regional office in each of the 12 Prefecture Police Directorates.
- Inter-Ministerial Anti-Corruption Commission, coordinates, prepared the AC Plan
- ACMG Anti-Corruption Monitoring Group, consists of high-level civil servants who monitor implementation of the AC Plan

profit and desires to obtain services that are not easily available. Deeper causes are high unemployment, the large informal economy, concentrations of power, leniency of international institutions, weak institutions (especially supervisory, enforcement, and judicial), weak civil society and media, ineffective government opposition, intimidation and organized crime, instability and job insecurity, low wages of public officials, and low transparency. Underlying causes are poverty as well as public attitudes and social awareness. Given this complexity, effectively combating corruption in the long run will require a comprehensive approach to development along with targeted measures.

Although power is gradually being decentralized in Albania, power remains highly concentrated at the central level and the decentralization of financial powers, a key ingredient in the ability

of local governments to implement their new powers, is occurring only slowly. Albania is sometimes called a network society since people often interact on the basis of personal relations and connections, characterized by loyalty and dependence, rather than purely on the basis of professionalism and transparency. While there are certainly great positive aspects of this cultural characteristic, it also makes it more difficult to reduce corruption. Corruption is also difficult to investigate because it is in the interest of the corrupted, the corrupter, and the mediator if one exists, to keep to transaction secret.

The attitudes of citizens are a further complication: citizens do not think of themselves as taxpayers with the legal right to inquire into the use of their taxes. This is related to Albania's transition from a society with complete state control. Most people are aware of corruption, and complain about it,

but many of those same people contribute to its perpetuation by paying bribes.

At the time of writing, corruption is at the center of political debate with multiple high profile accusations, resignations, and discharges. The challenge is to find innovative ways of linking the recommendations that emerge from empirical surveys and analysis with political willingness to implement them. The natural tendency is to target certain individuals rather than to address systematic weaknesses, but this does not have the same depth of impact as making appropriate changes to policies and institutions with the public support of prominent politicians.

In the medium term, one can hope for progress over corruption, not victory. There are different approaches:

- a) Reducing the power to engage in corruption (e.g. measures to shrink the scope of state power, involving such areas as state interventions and subsidies, civil servant discretionary power, customs tariffs, license requirements, government monopolies and public ownership, transparency and accountability, and decentralization and delegation);
- b) Reducing the willingness or need to engage in corruption (factors include professional and ethical values, awareness of social costs, fear of personal costs/risks, financial need, ability to resist intimidation/violence, job security, etc.)

8.1.4 RECOMMENDATIONS¹⁶⁵

- Continue moves towards greater specialization, training, and inter-agency coordination for corruption
- Train Civil Servants in public procurement and continue to strengthen the Public Procurement Agency
- Strengthen auditing standards, agencies, and capacities
- Create a School of Public Administration
- Of primary importance are awareness/empowerment initiatives that encourage people to become active rather than passive citizens.
- While there is room for tinkering, the current criminal law is sufficient. Much more important is the encouragement of dedicated professionals and the creation of strong political will to combat corruption from top to bottom.
- Critical to progress is a broad consensus

The Government of Albania drafted an updated **Matrix of Anti-Corruption Plan** in 2002. It contains over 160 specific objectives and measures, with deadlines, responsible institutions, expected outcomes, risks, and success indicators.

Objectives fall under these categories:

- Institutional Reform
 - Civil Service Reform
 - High State Control
- Improvement of Legislation and Consolidation of the Rule of Law
 - Improvement of the legislation
 - Reform in police
 - Reform in the General Prosecution Office
- Management of Public Finances
 - Budget
 - Taxes
 - Customs
- Promotion of Transparency and Integrity in Business Operations
 - Privatisation
- Public Information
 - Promotion of the Initiatives of the Anti-Corruption Program
 - Enhanced transparency

among people actively involved and interested in reducing corruption, with participation from civil society, business, and government.

- Credible and independent “watchdogs” are necessary to monitor corruption and receive media coverage. In general there is a need to build institutional mechanisms to promote an aggressive and independent media, and to involve better-developed civil society (business associations, NGOs, etc) in policy design.
- Prosecution could be facilitated by an amendment offering incentives for people involved in corruption to denounce themselves and their partners in corruption. Another possibility is to make it a criminal offence just to encourage someone to become corrupt. Activism by the Prosecution Service is also crucial.

8.2 Strengthening Institutions

8.2.1 ASSESSMENT

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS: There appears to be a declining trend in voter turnout in Albania as only 58.5% of registered voters actually voted

¹⁶⁵ Some of these recommendations and others can be found in: Corruption Measures in South-Eastern Europe - Country Reviews and Priorities for Reform, 2001, Stability Pact Anti-Corruption Initiative.

in the 2001 Parliamentary elections. According to the 2001 Qualitative Assessment of Poverty, people in all study sites generally want but are not confident that they have a capable government that solves problems and creates opportunities. A combination of factors - inadequate government presence, poor management of government functions, corruption, and a lack of faith in the ability of elections to improve conditions, have contributed to a low level of trust and confidence in Governments. This matches the perceptions of youth, where only "58% of the children feel that voting is a very effective way to improve things in their country."¹⁶⁶ See the section on Women's Empowerment, Table 17 Elected Women in the Local Authorities, and Table 18 Members of Parliament by Gender for a discussion of female participation in the electoral system and parliament.

The professionalism and transparency of the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) was considered to have improved during the June 2001 Parliamentary elections. Electoral irregularities may have affected the distribution of seats but not enough to alter which party came in first, and the opposition party chose to boycott the Parliament for half a year. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has monitored and reported on elections in Albania since 1996.¹⁶⁷ See Table 35 Elections in Albania for electoral results.

The Albanian Parliament, (People's Assembly) is composed of 140 deputies and is elected for four years. It has the authority to elect the President of the Republic; approve the candidate for Prime Minister; review presidential decrees; consent to the nomination of Constitutional Court members, remove judges from the Constitutional Court; appoint the General Prosecutor; initiate revisions of the Constitution; approve laws ratifying international agreements, etc. It functions according to regulations approved by the majority of all deputies. The meetings of the Assembly (plenary sessions and committees workings) are open to the public. The parliamentary administration is under the authority of the Speaker and of the Bureau of the Parliament. The highest civil servant of the Assembly is the Secretary-General.

The operational governing body of the Assembly is the Bureau, which includes: the Speaker, the

Deputy Speakers, and the Chairpersons of the Parliamentary Groups and of the Committees. The People's Assembly elects standing committees and may also establish special committees. At present, there are 13 standing committees: Agriculture and Food; Constitutional and Legal Issues; Defense; Economy, Finance and Privatization; Education, Culture, Science and Sport; Foreign Policy and International Relations; Human and Minorities Rights; Immunity, Mandates and Regulation; Industry, Transport, Public Works and Trade; Labor and Social Problems; Public Health and Environmental Protection; Public Information (Mass Media); and Public Order and National Security.

JUDICIAL SYSTEM: Several empirical studies

In practice, there is a lack of public confidence in the judiciary, and it is frequently impossible to find a witness for even the most serious criminal offences. Citizens are afraid to report complaints and suspected cases.

Source: Anti-Corruption Measures in SEE

carried out from 1998 to 2002 list judges and the court system among the three most corrupt sectors (Customs, Courts, Tax offices), according to perceptions of people working in the public administration and of the general public. The US State Department in 2001 wrote: "The judiciary is insufficient and subject to corruption. Executive pressure on the judiciary remains, but decreased slightly. There are complaints of unqualified and unprofessional judges and credible accounts of judges who were intimidated or bribed by powerful criminals."¹⁶⁸

The Anti-Corruption Scheme places emphasis on this sector however there is still much to do. Simple cases are often stretched out over months instead of weeks, new laws are not always implemented by judges, and many judges are not sensitive to human rights issues. The decision of most political parties to use the courts to challenge CEC decisions during the 2001 Parliamentary elections shows improved confidence, but the courts did not completely investigate irregularities in Lushnja. In 2000 there were Court Appeals of 4555 Civil Cases.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ Young Voices, UNICEF, 2001.

¹⁶⁷ http://www.osce.org/odihr/documents/reports/election_reports/al/

¹⁶⁸ Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2000: Albania, US State Department, 2001. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2000/eur/668pf.htm>

¹⁶⁹ Direct communication with the Ministry of Justice, 2001.

Main Laws Concerning Public Administration and Local Government¹⁷⁰

- Law on Public Procurement, 1995
- Law on Organization and Functioning of the Municipal/Commune Police, 1997
- Law on Taxes System in Republic of Albania, 1998
- Law on Urban Planning, 1998
- Law on Local Budget, 1998
- Law on Status of Civil Servant, 1999
- Law on Organization and Functioning of Local Governments, July 2000
- Law on Administrative-Territorial Division, 2000
- Law on Organization and Functioning of Tirana Municipality, 2000
- Law on Immovable State Property, 2001
- Law on Transfer of Immovable State Public Properties to Local Government, 2001

DECENTRALIZATION: Decentralization is being strongly promoted by the international community and by some actors within Albania who consider decentralization to be a key part of the democratic development of the country. Decentralization is designed to bring services closer to local communities, to improve democratic control and citizen's involvement, to achieve savings and greater cost-efficiency, to possibly lessen corruption, and to free the central government to engage more in policy development. In addition local control could lead to more appropriate and balanced service provision, which could lessen the pressure for migration. Risks associated with the process include the possibility that the quality of public service provision may decline if the local government is unprepared, lacks necessary human resources, does not have the sources of financing needed, and does not have political will. Since the 2002 UNDP Human Development Report focuses on local governance and decentralization this section simply provides a brief overview. See Table 32 Intended Local Responsibility for Infrastructure and Public Services.

The Government of Albania has a National Committee for Decentralization (NCD), and formalized by government decree the National Strategy for Decentralization and Local Autonomy drawn up by the Group of Experts

For purposes of local government, the territory of Albania is divided into 12 Regions/Prefectures, 65 Municipalities, and 309 communes. 65 of Albania's 74 officially proclaimed Towns are designated as Municipalities. Urban Municipalities are subdivided into Quarters with at least 15,000 inhabitants and rural Municipalities are subdivided into Villages with at least 200 inhabitants. Communes, usually rural, are subdivided into Villages and sometimes Towns.

for Decentralization (GED). 2002 is the third year of implementation of this strategy. In 2001 the Government stated that: "decentralization is harmonized and integrated with other Government strategies and activities, such as the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS), as well as sector strategies."

PUBLIC OFFICIALS: Reforming the Public Administration and Civil Service has also been given high priority, in order to improve efficiency and professionalism, reduce partisanship, and increase public confidence in Government. The number of Central Public Administration employees¹⁷¹ in mid 2001 was 124,590, 3.66%

The job security of Civil Servants has improved because of the better implementation of the Law on the Status of Civil Servants and improving performance of the Civil Service Commission. The recruitment procedure outlined in this law is increasing the portion of Civil Servants hired based on their qualifications. Ministries must publicly announce vacancies and form an evaluation committee with representatives from the Public Administration, academia, and civil society. Applicants take a written test without knowing the questions in advance and the results are evaluated anonymously. Short-listed candidates then take an oral interview. The committee votes on three candidates to rank and present to the Minister, who is supposed to appoint someone from the list. Alternatively, a Minister can appoint anyone but only for a maximum 6-month temporary contract.

¹⁷⁰ Local Government in Albania, 2001

¹⁷¹ Excluding the army, medical service, education, and local level.

of the population.¹⁷² The number of Central Administration Civil Servants¹⁷³ was 1,017 with an additional 1,811 Civil Servants in Local Administration,¹⁷⁴ for a total of 2.27% of public employment.¹⁷⁵ The People's Advocate (Ombudsman) established in 1999 is responsible for defending the rights of citizens from improper actions within the Public Administration. An improved salary scale came into effect in January 2002 for judges and Civil Servants, with health and education employees expected to receive a raise soon after.

MEDIA: Free speech is guaranteed in article 22 of the 1998 Constitution, article 23 guarantees the right of access to information, the criminal code punishes libel and defamation of public figures, and a Code of Ethics does exist, but the media tend to be biased and partisan in that they often selectively report or even fabricate facts and obtain much of their information from political party sources. Albanian print media sometimes use 'hate speech', reflecting an atmosphere of adversarial politics rather than religious or ethnic intolerance. Some minority language newspapers exist. The 1998 Law on Electronic Media created the National Council on Radio and TV; this law prevents political parties, the State, and religious groups from founding private TV or radio stations.

Albania's ratification of the European Convention on Human Rights in 1995 enables Albanian citizens whose human rights have been violated, including freedom of expression, to have their case heard in Strasbourg at the European Court of Human Rights. Investigative journalism is beginning to emerge, such as in corruption. Most journalists are relatively young. 37% of Albanians have a television and 93 % of Albanians watch television every day. Television is followed in popularity by radio (57% listen every day) and newspapers (21% read every day).¹⁷⁶ See Table 34 Print Media Circulation.

CIVIL SOCIETY: Civil Society includes many forms of social capital and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) but this section will focus on NGOs. The NGO sector has grown rapidly

during the last ten years, having a boom during the Kosovo crisis, but funding for NGOs has diminished since then. There is a National Registry for NGOs within the Court System, and the 2001 Law on Nonprofit Organizations improved the legal framework, but understanding and advice on NGO legal issues is concentrated in Tirana. Estimates of the number of NGOs varies widely and only one fifth of 500 NGOs sampled in an ACER survey were more than sporadically active. Civil Society is growing but is not yet able to independently and effectively balance and monitor Government power and contribute regularly to decision-making. A network of NGO resource centers has been set up in different regions of Albania to support NGOs.

8.2.2 ANALYSIS

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS: Albania has spent the past decade building democratic institutions: the focus now should be on their performance, which should increase public confidence in institutions and their desire to participate freely. Relevant formal institutions include the Legislature, the Court System, the Supreme Audit Commission, the Ombudsman, etc, and informal institutions include the media, Civil Society, trade unions, political parties, etc. Debate should center around issues such as the quality of the rule of law; incentives and the managerial environment in which civil servants operate; the effectiveness of responsible control of civil servants; the power of Civil Society as a balance to government control; public perceptions of state legitimacy, elite behavior towards corruption, accountability, and transparency; rules and practices towards information delivery; and economic structure including the centralized nature of economic power. The Youth Parliament, which will cover all 12 Prefectures by September 2002, offers youth a voice in decision-making and the perception that they have a role to play in Albania's development.

The Albanian Parliament, (People's Assembly) has not yet reached its intended capacity to perform its constitutional role in an effective and efficient manner. It needs to be tuned to the public to ensure that the decisions it takes are commensurate with the interests of a cross-

¹⁷² Monitoring of Institutional Performance Indicators: Albania PAR Project, 2001.

¹⁷³ In the Council of Ministers, Ministries, President's Office, & People's Assembly.

¹⁷⁴ In Municipalities, Districts, & Regions.

¹⁷⁵ Monitoring of Institutional Performance Indicators: Albania PAR Project, 2001.

¹⁷⁶ Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices and Beliefs (KAPB) Survey, 2001.

section of the Albanian people. Albanian Members of Parliament (MPs) face difficulties in fulfilling their legislative, oversight and representational functions. MPs do not yet fully understand their role, responsibilities and parliamentary operations, and should have more in-depth knowledge of the issues on which they are called upon to legislate. Parliamentary staff require more facilities and intellectual resources in order to provide efficient support to the MPs. The working methods of the parliament including the organization and functioning of its secretariat need to be revisited.

It is obvious that the Parliament, as a new democratic institution needs support from the international community, but such support needs to be provided in a co-ordinated manner for maximum impact, thereby contributing to the establishment of the rule of law and good governance.

COURT SYSTEM: Albania's court system faces large hurdles, including the implementation of court decisions and collaboration with the police.¹⁷⁷ The January 2002 salary increase was a step forward. Excessive delays in court proceedings are often caused when lawyers, defendants, prosecutors or witnesses do not show up in court.¹⁷⁸ The structures of a Justice system already exist; the problem is in their transparent protection of the Rule of Law. Reforming the judiciary and other law and order services is an important requirement for the social and economic development of Albania, along with strengthening Civil Society and legislative frameworks. Priorities in the judicial system should be strengthening independence, professionalism, legislation, and the role of the High Judicial Inspection Office.

DECENTRALIZATION: Obstacles encountered so far include difficulties with human resources and inconsistent delegation of power and resources. There is a shortage of qualified people at the local level to carry out new responsibilities. Decentralization is straining the capacity of Local Government in general and human resource management in particular to implement the reforms. It requires the involvement of more well-educated and trained people. Few educated people are left in rural areas, so sustaining rural governments will be

a big challenge. Political will is also a concern at both ends, and tasks are sometimes delegated without the accompanying fiscal decentralization, leaving local government unable to implement new responsibilities.

The weaknesses in the judiciary lead to corruption and are due to:

- Political influence in judicial appointments and dismissals;
- Poor legal education, including judicial education;
- Low salaries;
- Poor court and case management procedures and techniques;
- Lack of trained court personnel;
- Vastly inadequate physical infrastructure;
- And lack of access to up-to-date legal information.

Source: Albanian Country Report, SELDI, http://www.seldi.net/albania_index.htm

PUBLIC OFFICIALS: It is hoped that hiring people based on qualifications, improving their financial compensation, and assuring them of their job security, will lead to increased dedication and a greater willingness to refrain from corrupt behavior. High turnover of public officials after elections, especially since 1992 when many officials from the previous Communist administration were purged, seriously undermined performance standards. Officials have low job security and remain lesser paid than equivalent employees in the private sector and civil society.

MEDIA: The media suffer from a shortage of finances for day to day operations and investment, a lack of modern technology outside of Tirana, poor working conditions and wages for workers, poor training and inconsistent professionalism, a lack of analytical economic journalists, low advertising revenue in rural areas, and dependency on business lobbies and political parties for direct or indirect subsidies. Poor road infrastructure makes it difficult to distribute print media in rural areas and much of the population cannot afford subscriptions. Journalists call for self-regulation but this is unlikely to be successful until journalists are freer from the demands of their

¹⁷⁷ UNDCP semi-annual report, 2001.

¹⁷⁸ Judicial Systems and Human Rights in the OSCE Region in 2001, IHF, April 2002. <http://www.ihf-hr.org/reports/Warsaw%202002%20Report.pdf>

newspaper publishers and editors. Political parties favor certain news outlets over others by telling their followers where to place their advertisements, and the Government uses preferred news outlets to advertise the activities of State corporations.

CIVIL SOCIETY: While concentrated in Tirana, NGOs are also present in other areas of the country. Rural communities cannot wait for the State to fix their situation; their problems cannot be overcome without the cooperation of voluntary non-governmental and business organizations of communities, farmers, agribusiness etc. Benefits of cooperation would be organization, communication, and joint projects and solutions. Hundreds of rural associations already exist, the majority of which are water users associations (WUA), but most villages still do not have any organizations and have a low level of understanding of the need for organization and pooling resources. Rural business associations tend to be more established than farmers' associations. Rural NGOs face three main problems: it is difficult to encourage individuals to become members of cooperative associations, the lack of infrastructure limits their activity, and they lack sufficient financial resources since members tend to consider contributions to be a gift rather than a duty. Rural NGOs need to exchange information and cooperate more, for instance using umbrella NGOs.

Conflict of interest is a large contributor to the lack of independence of civil society, as seen by networks of board memberships across civil society, government and private business that can inhibit criticism and funnel funds towards preferred clients.

NGOs in general need capacity building in terms of management, coalition building, and lobbying. Many NGOs are dependent on foreign sources of funding and often lack offices and equipment. Albanian media do not often turn to NGOs as a source of information. NGOs often have low membership and tend to lack accountability, and many NGOs are run in a top down manner. Often NGOs are affiliated with a political party. An even deeper reason for the weakness of Civil Society is the general lack of trust within Albanian society, and the discrediting of volunteering after decades of forced participation

in so-called voluntary activities.

8.2.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

- Regarding elections, the 2001 OSCE/ODIHR report highlights two main issues.¹⁷⁹ The first is that elections should be held in only one round, to avoid the problems associated with multiple rounds as experienced in the 2001 Parliamentary Elections. Second, the Electoral Code and the elections infrastructure need to be reformed and improved. Examples of specific measures that could be taken: Ballot papers and boxes could be safer and transported more quickly, polling stations could be monitored with cameras, and the Government could prevent unwarranted interference from members of the police and secret service.
- Regarding the Albanian Parliament (People's Assembly), the Assembly needs to strengthen its capacity and focus on ways of improving the expertise and skills of MPs and parliamentary staff in order to (a) Increase the quality of legislation, the oversight and representative role of parliament; (b) Foster greater interaction between the Parliament and the electorate giving greater publicity to the proceedings of the Parliament; (c) Promote closer ties between Parliament and society, with special emphasis on the role of parliament in the budget and poverty reduction process; (d) Improve the capacity of staff to provide high-quality support services to the MPs; and (e) Promote the use of new information and communication technologies; etc.

COURT SYSTEM

- The UN and should support the ongoing efforts of the Government in these areas identified by SELDI:¹⁸⁰ Publication and dissemination of legal information; Strengthening judicial independence; Developing the code of ethics for judges; Strengthening formal and fair enforcement mechanisms; Increasing the uniformity of legal drafts; Improving the level of basic legal and further education for magistrates; Improving the institutional capacity and curricula of the Law faculty; De-

¹⁷⁹ http://www.osce.org/odihr/documents/reports/election_reports/al/alb_june2001_efr.php3

¹⁸⁰ Albanian Country Report, 2001. http://www.seldi.net/albania_2.htm

signing trainings on corruption cases; Eliminating intentional delays in court proceedings that encourage bribery; Establishing and implementing sanctions for lawyers who intentionally delay court trials without any legal reason; And improving the physical infrastructure of the courts.

- Monitor and advocate the strict separation of executive and judicial power.
- Continue to strengthen the Judicial Inspection Office.

DECENTRALIZATION

- Develop and explore plans for local government reform.
- Support the implementation of decentralization by assisting with the challenges such as preparing local human resources.
- Foster regular and transparent channels of communication between local government units to discuss the implementation of decentralization and the evolution of the rights and duties of local government.

PUBLIC OFFICIALS

- Continue efforts to clarify the accountability, responsibility, and authority of public officials and institutions, and to strengthen the division between political and civil status.
- Improve transparency by strengthening citizens' access to information.
- Capacity building and technical assistance are greatly needed in many departments, but donors should be careful to provide training under a common plan developed with the Government, in order to avoid inefficient duplications of effort or disagreements over which methodologies to introduce.

MEDIA

- Media should find ways to operate as professional businesses independent of influence from political parties, lobbies and clans. Only then can training and ethical standards play an important role in improving the quality of media content.
- The Government should refrain from using public funds to influence media.
- There is room for cooperation between media and NGOs to fight corruption and

the abuse of human rights and to monitor Government activity.

- Reporters need to become more sensitive to issues domestic violence and trafficking of women and children instead and avoid perpetuating stereotypes and stigmatizing victims.

NGOs

- Hiring local staff is better than relying entirely on foreign consultants, but hiring local staff can also weaken existing local institutions, so the international community should consider working with and strengthening these existing local institutions more often.
- Recognize that those international programs which do not use local NGOs rarely leave behind much expertise or capacity when they finish.
- Recognize that the policy of some international donors of avoiding working with NGOs that have become established, in order to foster newer NGOs, can starve the established NGOs of resources and sometimes leads to their closure.
- Sometimes new NGOs do not initially have the capacity to respond to the demands and procedures of international donors. Established NGOs can help promote and build the capacity of new NGOs by acting as intermediaries with international donors in a partnership.
- Improve the capacity and access to information of NGOs in rural and urban areas outside of Tirana by establishing more NGO resource centers that provide the following services to NGOs: information on the NGO legal framework, training opportunities inside and outside of Albania, and funding opportunities; assistance to set up partnerships with well-established Albanian NGOs and international NGOs; training on NGO management; training in proposal writing; and monitoring, evaluation and reporting.
- Small grants programs can be used to funnel funds through these NGO resource centers to improve access to funding for NGOs outside of Tirana. Fund management can be performed by the resource centers and should be transparent, accountable, and open with no pre-approved candidates.

- Donors should encourage NGOs to carry out profitable/commercial/economic activities permitted by the new law in order to compensate for a decrease in foreign funding and to move towards self-sustainability in the long run. Donors could provide “seed funds” to enable NGOs to begin economic activity
- NGOs should try to involve more youth, especially in their internal leadership.
- Rural communities could benefit from education on the merits of cooperative initiatives in democratic society, and existing rural NGOs need training to deal with the challenges and alternative methods of developing an NGO along with better exchange of information and networking.
- The UN and other donors should promote accountability and reduce corruption in the NGO sector by demanding and providing capacity building for audits of NGOs, and by carrying out spot checks (For instance (a) to verify that an NGO is really paying its employees or subcontractors the wages agreed in the contract, or (b) to discover if hired surveyors are genuinely conducting a representative sampling or if they are filling in questionnaires themselves).
- The Government and the UN should regularly consult rural NGO forums and associations, some of which can offer professional expertise on specialized development topics. These consulting relations need to be institutionalized rather than sporadic and token.

9 Concluding Remarks

Exiting the transition phase will require both the passage of time and the rebuilding of an economic and Governmental system that is consistent with, and supportive of, both Human Security and personal freedom. Albania has made important progress during the transition in the areas of economic growth, institution building, and personal freedom. These achievements should be duly recognized and consolidated, and emphasis should shift from economic growth towards addressing inequality, from building institutions towards improving institutional performance, and from expanding personal freedoms towards fostering social cohesion.

These and other key concerns for Sustainable Human Development in Albania are identified and addressed in this Common Country Assessment (CCA). The document and the process of creating it provide a foundation for ensuring that Albania obtains maximum benefit from the intervention of UN agencies. Poverty eradication measures, promotion of human rights and good governance, mainstreaming gender, support to economic reforms and social security policies, and environmental protection are just a few of the areas where assistance from UN can make a difference.

The CCA, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), and the Report on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) draw on the time and skill of dozens of UN, Government and Civil Society representatives. They help bring coordination and coherence to the UN system in Albania and permit the UN to identify its niche among partners in Albania's development.

The support and assistance provided by the UN where comparative advantages and expertise exist, or where UN can identify and make available such knowledge, will enable those involved in advocacy or decision-making to systematically analyze the various obstacles and promising dimensions of national policy measures. The success of future intervention by the UN system will depend upon building partnerships with other donors, with Government and Civil Society, as well as the private sector and media. Through dialogue and common action Albania can build a foundation for Human Development by building up Human Security and encouraging more "pro-poor" economic growth.

10 Agencies

10.1 Indicators

Table 1 CCA Key Indicators

Income –Poverty	
Poverty headcount ratio (% of population below \$1 dollar a day)	17.4% in 2001
Poverty headcount ratio (% below national poverty line)	29.6% in 1998
Poverty gap ratio	11.5% 1998
Poorest fifth's share of national consumption	Unknown
Food Security and Nutrition	
% of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption (caloric intake in context of food balance sheet)	Unknown
% of household income spent on food for the poorest quintile	Unknown
% of children under 5 years who are severely underweight	4.3% in 2000
% of children under 5 years who are severely stunted	17.3% in 2000
Reproductive and Maternal Health	
Contraceptive prevalence rate	17% in 2000
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	21.6 in 1998
% of births attended by skilled health personnel	95% in 2000
Fertility rate	2.1% in 1999
Child Health and Mortality	
% of children under age 1 immunized against measles	61% in 2000
Infant mortality rate (probability of death before age 1 per 1000)	28 in 2000
Under 5 mortality rate (probability of death per 1000)	33 in 2000
HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other Diseases	
HIV adult prevalence rate	Unknown, 72 cases reported as of Nov. 2001
HIV prevalence among 15-to-24 –year-old pregnant women	Unknown
% of respondents aged 15-24 who both correctly identify ways of preventing the sexual transmission of HIV and who reject major misconceptions about HIV transmission	Low
Ratio of orphans to non-orphans aged 10-14 who attend school	Unknown
Education	
% of children of primary school age attending primary school	90% in 2000
% of children that enter primary school who reach grade five	82% in 2000
% aged 15 or over who are literate	88% in 2000
Literacy rate of 15-24 year olds	93% in 2000
Child Welfare	
% of children < age 15 who are working	32% in 2000
Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment	
Females share (%) of paid employment in non-agricultural activities	42% in 2000
% of girls in primary, secondary and tertiary education	48, 49, and 60 in 2000
Ratio of literate females to males, 15-to-24-year-olds	Unknown
% of seats held by women in national parliament	5.7 in 2001
Employment and Sustainable Livelihood	
Employment to population of working age ratio	55% in 2000
Unemployment rate	14.4% in 2001
Informal sector employment as % of total employment	At least 30%, 1998 estimate

Housing and Traditional Fuel use	
No. of persons per room, or average floor area per person	0.6 (poor) 0.7 (non poor people) in 1998
% of population relying on traditional fuels for energy use	Unknown
Environment	
Carbon Dioxide emissions (per capita)	Unknown
Arable land per capita	Unknown
Land area protected to maintain biological diversity	5.8% in 2000
Proportion of land area covered by forest	34% in 2000
GDP per unit of energy use (as proxy for energy efficiency)	Unknown
% of population who use a safe drinking water source	97% in 2000
% of population who use a sanitary means of excreta disposal	90% in 2000
Proportion of people with access to secure tenure	Unknown
Crime Prevention and Drug Control	
No of intentional homicides per 100,000 inhabitants	Unknown
Area under illegal cultivation of coca, opium poppy and cannabis	Unknown
Seizures of illicit drugs	Over 300 in 2001
Prevalence of drug abuse	30,000 estimated
Demographics	
Population size	3.087 million in 2001
Total fertility rate	2.10 in 1999
Life expectancy at birth (years)	76,4 female, 71,7 male in 1999
Economy	
GDP per capita (USD)	1,094 in 2000
External debt (USD) as % of GDP	28.9 (1998), 26.5 (1999), 27.6 (2000), 31.3 (2001)
Decadal average annual growth rate of GDP per capita	3.2% from 1990-2000
Gross domestic savings as % of GDP	9.9 (1998), 9.6 (1999), 12.0 (00), 12.7 (01)
Exports (USD million)	259.5 in 2000
Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows (USD million)	143 in 2000
% of public expenditure on social services (Social insurance, Health insurance, Unemployment insurance benefits, Social assistance, Housing subsidy)	9.11(1995), 7.02 (1998), 7.09 (1999), 7.41 (2000)

Table 2 Main Macroeconomic Indicators ¹⁸¹

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001 ¹⁸²					
Population (mil.)	3.4	3.2	3.4	3.2	3.1					
Currency (Lek/USD)	148.9	150.6	137.7	143.7	145.0					
Inflation (%)	42.1	8.7	-1.0	4.2	1.8					
Unemployment rate (%)	28	20.7	18	16.8	14.4					
Real GDP growth rate (%)	-7.0	8.0	7.3	7.8	7.3					
♦ Industry % of GDP	12.4	11.9	11.9	11.8	11.5					
♦ Agriculture % of GDP	56	54.4	52.6	52.3	51.0					
♦ Construction % of GDP	11.2	12.6	13.5	13.8	14.8					
♦ Transport % of GDP	2.7	3	3.3	3.3	3.5					
♦ Services % of GDP	17.6	18	18.8	18.9	19.2					
GNP/Capita (USD)	750	830	1080.9	1094.4						
Remittances (mil. USD)	266.9	452.2	368.1	530.8	568.0					
Average monthly wage ¹⁸³ (lek)	9558	11509	12708	14963	17218					
Foreign Direct Investment (mil USD)	42	45	43	143 ¹⁸⁴						
General Gov. Revenue (% GDP)	16.7	20.3	21.1	22.37						
General Gov. Expenditure (% GDP)	29.4	30.7	32.6	31.64						
Current account balance (% GDP)	-12.1	06.1	-8.0	-8.5						
Current account (mil. USD)	-254	-45	-265	-262	-306					
Exports (mil. USD)	141.3	206.5	275.3	259.5						
Imports (mil. USD)	619.8	794.8	899.0	1059.4						
Trade balance (mil. USD)	-478.5	-588.3	-871.4	-799.8	-911					
Main trading partners (%)	Ex	Im	Ex	Im	Ex	Im	Ex	Im	Ex	Im
♦ Italy	49	47	60	44	67	38	70	36	71	31.9
♦ Greece	20	27	20	29	14	28	13	28	12.7	25.8
♦ Germany	7	4	6	4	6	6	7	5	5.5	5.9
Main exports	Textiles, footwear, base metals, agricultural products									
Main imports	Agriculture/food, mineral products, machinery, textiles									

Table 3 Selected Important Memberships and Associations

UN	United Nations
IMF	International Monetary Fund, Oct. 1991
IBRD/WB	International Bank for Reconstruction & Development / World Bank Oct. 1991
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction & Development
EIB	European Investment Bank
BSEC	Black Sea Economic Cooperation
BSTDB	Black Sea Trade & Development Bank
NATO PFP	North Atlantic Treaty Organization Partnership for Peace, 1994
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1995
	Islamic Development Bank
WTO	World Trade Organization, July 2000
MOU	Memorandum of understanding on Trade Liberalization and Facilitation, 2001
SAP	Stability & Association Process: EU recommends opening Stabilization & Association Agreement (SAA) talks, June 2001
	Bilateral Macedonia & Albania Free Trade Agreement, January 2002

¹⁸¹ WB, IMF, EBRD, Instat, and Bank of Albania, 2001.¹⁸² Third quarter 2001.¹⁸³ Only the public sector is included in this figure.¹⁸⁴ Includes privatization of telecommunications companies.

Table 4 Free Trade Agreements in South Eastern Europe as of January 2002¹⁸⁵

	Albania	Bosnia and Hercegovina	Bulgaria	Croatia	FYR of Macedonia	Moldova	Romania	FR Yugoslavia
Albania		IN and initial proposals exchanged		IN meeting 15 Dec. 2001	NU Installed 11/01/02			IN First meeting early 2002
Bosnia and Hercegovina	IN and initial proposals exchanged			AF 1/1/2001	AF 1/1/01			Signed 19 December 2001
Bulgaria				Signed 4 December 2001	AF 01/01/00		CEFTA	NU Next meeting early 2002
Croatia	IN meeting 15 Dec. 2001	AF 1/1/2001	Signed 4 December 2001		AF 09/05/97		NU last meeting 18/06/2001	NU next meeting early 2002
FYR of Macedonia	NU Initialed 11/01/02	NU proposals under consideration	AF 01/01/00	AF 09/05/97				AF 7/10/96 UR
Moldova							AF 17/11/94	
Romania			CEFTA	NU Last meeting held on 18/06/01		AF 17/11/94		
FR Yugoslavia	IN First meeting early 2002	Signed 19 December 2001	NU Next meeting early 2002	NU Next meeting early 2002	AF 7/10/96 UR			

Table 5 Customs and Tax Agreements as of Mid 2001

Customs Agreements		Tax Agreements	
<i>Country</i>	<i>Year of Entry into Force</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Year of Entry into Force</i>
Greece	1993	Poland, Romania, Malaysia	1995
Italy	1998	Hungary, Turkey	1996
Macedonia	1998	Check Republic	1997
Turkey	1999	Russia	1998
		Croatia	1999
		Italy, Sweden, Norway, Bulgaria	2000
		Malta, Greece, Switzerland	2001

¹⁸⁵ IN – Invitation to begin negotiations received; NU – Negotiations underway; UR – Under revision; AF – Applied from.
Source: <http://www.stabilitypact.org>

Table 6 Incidence and Depth of Poverty by Urban and Rural¹⁸⁶

	Urban		Rural		Total	
	Extreme Poor	Poor	Extreme Poor	Poor	Extreme Poor	Poor
Relative poverty lines						
Incidence	9.7	17.2	20.1	36.8	16.2	29.6
Depth	2.7	6.4	7.3	14.5	5.6	11.5
Absolute poverty lines						
Incidence	10.4	30.3	21.5	56.3	17.4	46.6
Depth	3.0	11.3	7.8	23.6	6.0	19.0

Relative Poverty Line (poor) = 60% of median income per capita

Relative Poverty Line (extremely poor) = 40% of median income per capita

Absolute Poverty Line (poor) = 1993 PPP rate equal to 1.075 dollar per day per person

Absolute Poverty Line (extremely poor) = 1993 PPP rate equal to 2.15 dollar per day per person

Table 7 Poverty by Prefectures¹⁸⁷

	Urban		Rural		Total	
	Extreme poor	Poor	Extreme poor	Poor	Extreme poor	Poor
Berat	13.8	29.9	2.5	14.1	6.3	19.4
Diber	11.1	19.8	28.5	48.3	25.6	43.6
Durres	6.4	12.7	11.2	25.3	9.0	19.6
Elbasan	12.1	18.1	41.4	59.4	32.6	47.0
Gjirokaster	11.1	20.4	9.5	20.9	9.9	20.8
Fier	3.0	6.8	9.1	20.4	6.3	14.3
Korce	12.9	20.5	23.7	42.3	20.7	36.2
Kukes	17.6	27.7	39.9	63.1	36.6	57.9
Lezhe	14.1	27.8	14.9	31.7	14.6	30.5
Shkoder	17.9	27.5	19.4	39.4	18.9	35.3
Tirane	6.1	11.0	20.9	45.3	11.7	23.9
Vlore	5.6	13.2	6.2	14.6	5.9	14.0
Total	9.7	17.23	20.1	36.83	16.2	29.56

Table 8 Poverty as Measured by UBN by Prefecture¹⁸⁸

	Poor	Extreme Poor	Non-Poor
Berat	51.0	22.8	49.0
Diber	40.7	16.6	59.3
Durres	28.0	7.6	72.0
Elbasan	41.7	15.1	58.3
Gjirokas	46.7	14.3	53.3
Fier	44.3	14.5	55.7
Korce	45.0	15.7	55.0
Kukes	43.0	16.6	57.0
Lezhe	34.9	10.3	65.1
Shkoder	41.6	13.1	58.4
Tirane	39.0	13.8	61.0
Vlore	46.2	16.1	53.8
Total	41.6	14.4	58.4

Table 9 Unmet Basic Needs (UBN) by Urban/Rural¹⁸⁹

	Urban	Rural	Total
Inadequate water and sanitation	3.91	27.3	18.1
Inadequate housing conditions	37.1	34.1	35.3
Inadequate heating	39.2	36.2	37.4
Crowding	26.2	11.1	17.0
Education	14.2	36.1	27.5
Poor (two or more UBN)	36.7	44.9	41.6
Extreme poor (three or more UBN)	10.2	17.1	14.4
Non-poor	63.3	55.1	58.4

¹⁸⁶ Results of Household Living Conditions Survey (LCS) October 1998, Instat, July 2001.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid

¹⁸⁸ Ibid

¹⁸⁹ Ibid

Table 10 Household Poverty Rates

Poverty rate by major source of household income¹⁹⁰	Total	Urban	Rural
Public, Private or Self-Employed Non-agricultural work	7.9	4.6	13.5
Work in agriculture	40.1	20.6	40.6
Pensions (incl. Disability)	21.0	12.2	27.1
Unemployment benefits	58.5	57.2	64.3
Ndihma ekonomike (economic assistance)	62.6	59.0	64.2
Total	24.9	14.6	31.9
Poverty rates by employment status of household head	Total	Urban	Rural
Employed	23.0	5.3	32.6
Unemployed	50.8	48.8	55.5
Pensioners including disability	20.7	12.1	26.4
Others	20.6	15.6	22.4
Total	24.9	14.6	31.6

Table 11 Economic Conditions Over Time by Main Source of Income¹⁹¹

Total	Improved	No Change	Worse
Income from public sector	22.84	64.48	12.68
Income from private sector	25.77	63.04	11.19
Income self-employment	26.58	60.19	13.23
Income from agriculture	21.63	70.44	7.93
Pensions	16.46	68.76	14.78
Total	20.0	66.3	13.7

Table 12 Main Locations of Certain Vulnerable Groups in Albania¹⁹²

Vulnerable Groups	Cities			Rural Communities		
	North & North East	South & South East	Mid & Coastal Area	Mountains North East	Mountains South	Mountains & Coastal Area
Children & school abandonment			X	X	X	X
Institutionalized & abandoned children		X	X		X	X
Young men & criminal behavior	X	X	X			
Drug addicts	X	X	X		X	
Abandoned elderly			X	X	X	X
Young women & prostitution	X		X	X		X
Adult women without male protection		X	X		X	X

¹⁹⁰ Results of Household Living Conditions Survey (LCS) October 1998, Instat, July 2001.¹⁹¹ Ibid¹⁹² Albania: Filling the Vulnerability Gap. February 2000. World Bank Technical Paper No. 460. <http://www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/regions.htm> click Albania, bank reports.

Table 13 Employment and Unemployment Data¹⁹⁴

Employment Data	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Economically active population, 1000s		1489	1347	1423	1309	1274	1301	1320	1305	1283
-Male		782	760	814	775	764	794	803	791	754
-Female		707	587	609	534	510	507	517	514	529
Active rate, %			59	65	63	59	57	56	55	
-male			68	75	75	74	71	69	66	
-female			51	55	50	45	43	42	44	
Employment, 1000s		1095	1046	1161	1138	1116	1170	1085	1065	1065
-Male		588	601	673	684	676	684	676	661	641
-Female		507	445	488	454	440	423	409	404	427
Unemployment Data										
Registered unemployment, 1000s		394	301	262	171	158	194	235	240	215
-Male		194	159	141	91	88	110	127	130	113
-Female		200	142	121	80	70	84	108	110	102
Registered Unemployment rate, %	9	27	22	18	13	12	15	18	18	16.8
-male	8	25	21	17	12	12	14	16	16	14.8
-female	11	28	24	20	15	14	17	21	21	19.3

Table 14 Employment and Unemployment by Sex and Age, 1998¹⁹⁴

Employment, Total				Employment, %		
Age –groups	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
15-19	92307	43501	48806	8,2	6,6	10,4
20-29	240886	127189	113697	21,4	19,4	24,3
30-39	280842	165547	115295	25,0	25,2	24,6
40-49	301853	172608	129245	26,8	25,3	27,6
50-59	159338	112251	47087	14,2	17,1	10,0
60+	49962	35534	14428	4,4	5,4	3,1
Total	1125188	656630	468558	100	100	100
Unemployment, total				Unemployment,%		
Age-groups	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
15-19	35675	21048	14627	15,4	17,5	13,2
20-29	78607	44059	34548	34,0	36,7	31,1
30-39	51973	20585	31388	22,5	17,2	28,2
40-49	44310	20473	23837	19,2	17,1	21,4
50+	20567	13775	6792	8,9	11,5	6,1
Total	231132	119940	111192	100,0	100,0	100,0

¹⁹³ Social Indicators Yearbook, Instat, 2001.¹⁹⁴ Results of Household Living Conditions Survey (LCS) October 1998, Instat, July 2001.

Table 15 Composition of Major Sources of Income by Poor/Non-Poor¹⁹⁵

	Poor	Non-Poor	Total
Public, Private or Self-Employed Non-agricultural work	10.31	40.03	32.63
Work in agriculture	48.38	23.96	30.04
Pensions (incl. Disability)	21.05	26.27	24.97
Unemployment benefits	4.42	1.04	1.88
Other	15.84	8.71	10.48
Total	100	100	100

Table 16 Major Institutions Offering Rural Micro-Credit¹⁹⁶

Micro-Finance Institution	Year Started	Total value of loans disbursed so far (USD)	Total number of loans disbursed so far	Outstanding loan portfolio (USD\$)	No. of active clients	Average loan size (USD\$)	Repayment Rate	Women's Involvement
RFF ¹⁹⁷	1992	12,638,266 Sep-01	24,584 Sep-01	3,465,859 Sep-01	5,048 Jun-01	879 Sep-01	97.50% Sep-01	
MAFF ¹⁹⁸	2000	2,410,222 Jan-02	4058 Jan-02	1,789,774 Jan-02	3013 Jan-02	600 Jan-02	82% Jan-02	520 Women
PSHM ¹⁹⁹	1998	4,700,000 Sep-01	4008 Sep-01 (35-40% rural)	2.2 Nov-01	1530 Dec-01		96.90% Nov-01	approx. 25% of loans signed by women only, excluding co-signed loans

Table 17 Elected Women in the Local Authorities²⁰⁰

	Elections for Local Government					
	1997			2000		
	Total	Females	%	Total	Females	%
Mayors	65	3	4.5	65	8	12.3
Head of Communes	309	1	0.3	309	5	1.6
Secretary of the Municipality Council	65	10	15	65	2	3.0
Secretary of the Commune Council	309	14	19	309	7	2.2

¹⁹⁵ Results of Household Living Conditions Survey (LCS) October 1998, Instat, July 2001.

¹⁹⁶ In the past the Rural Commercial Bank was somewhat active in rural credit but it merged with the Savings bank, which contains over 80% of domestic deposits in lek. Sources: "Rural Finance Fund: Activity Presentation" by RFF presented at Nov 2001 conference of ACER/BSEC; PSHM and IFAD direct communication, 2001.

¹⁹⁷ Rural Finance Fund - RFF (World Bank)

¹⁹⁸ Mountain Areas Finance Fund - MAFF (International Fund for Agriculture Development IFAD)

¹⁹⁹ Albanian Partner in Microcredit (PSHM)

²⁰⁰ Albanian Response to the Millennium Development Goals, HDPC, 2002.

Table 18 Members of Parliament by Gender²⁰¹

Year	Male		Female		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	
1920	37	100.0	0	0.0	37
1921	78	100.0	0	0.0	78
1925	75	100.0	0	0.0	75
1928	57	100.0	0	0.0	57
1946	76	92.7	6	7.3	82
1950	104	86.0	17	14.0	121
1958	171	91.0	17	9.0	188
1970	192	72.7	72	27.3	264
1974	167	66.8	83	33.2	250
1982	174	69.6	76	30.4	250
1990	169	67.6	81	32.4	250
1991	199	79.6	51	20.4	250
1992	131	93.6	9	6.4	140
1996	119	85.0	21	15.0	140
1997	144	92.9	11	7.1	155
2001	132	94.3	8	5.7	140

Table 19 Data on drug users and treatments²⁰²

Most common drugs used and for which treatment is sought			Portion of injecting drug users in the Tirana Toxicological Clinic			
Prevalence	Drug used	Treatment sought	1998	1999	2000	2001
1	Cannabis/Marijuana	Heroin	20%	25%	40%	80%
2	Heroin	Marijuana				
3	Cocaine	Cocaine				

Table 20 Level 0-5 – Female Percentage of Students²⁰³

	1990-1991	1996-1997	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000
Total	48	49	49	49	49
Level 0	50	50	50	50	51
Level 1 & 2	48	48	48	48	48
--Level 1	48	48	48	48	48
--Level 2	48	49	49	49	49
Level 3	47	48	47	48	49
--General	55	52	51	51	52
--Vocational	40	31	28	30	31
Level 5 (University)	51	57	57	60	60
--Full time	52	59	61	62	62
--Part time	50	55	52	57	58

²⁰¹ Women and Men in Albania, Instat, 2001.²⁰² Direct communication with UNDCP, 2001.²⁰³ Yearbook of Education Statistics, Instat, 2001.

Table 21 Number of Female University Graduates and Teachers²⁰⁴

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Level 5 No. of graduated female students	2407	2408	2431	2112	2556	2606	1990	2456	2612	
Level 5 No. of full time teaching staff	1806	1805	1680		1504	1594		1585	1780	1697
--No. Female	513	489	197		406	441		466	637	634
--% Female	28%	27%	12%		27%	28%		29%	36%	37%

Table 22 Population Data – Births, Deaths and Abortions²⁰⁵

	1980	1985	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Rate of natural population increase (birth rate minus death rate, excluding migration)	20.1	20.4	18.8	19.5	18.3	18.0	15.8	16.9	16.8	15.4	13.0	12.5	12.2	
Crude birth rate (live births per 1000 population)	26.5	26.2	24.4	25.1	24.0	23.7	21.3	22.4	22.1	21.7	18.5	17.9	17.1	20
Crude death rate (deaths per 1000 population)	6.4	5.8	5.6	5.6	5.5	5.7	5.6	5.7	5.5	5.3	5.5	5.4	4.9	5
Live Births, 1000s			78.9	82.1	77.4	75.4	67.7	72.2	72.1	68.4	61.7	60.1	57.9	
Adolescent birth rate (live births per 1000 women aged 15-19)			15.6	15.3	14.8	16.5	17.3	21.2	22.9	22.8	19.4	17.7	16.0	
Share of births to mothers under age 20 (% of total live births)			3.0	2.9	2.9	3.3	3.8	4.4	4.8	5.1	4.9	4.6	4.4	
Share of low-weight births (births under 2,500 grams as % of total live births)			6.5	6.5	6.3	5.8	5.6	5.7	5.5	5.4	5.2	5.2	5.0	5
% aged 0-3 with malnutrition					28	28	18.4	18.4	9.4					
Total fertility rate (births per woman)	3.62	3.26	2.96	3.03	2.80	2.80	2.60	2.70	2.60	2.50	2.20	2.20	2.10	2.5
Abortions per 100 live births			29.6	31.8	39.3	36.8	49.4	43.4	44.8	40.6	35.8	31.5		
Abortions per 1000 live births								435	449	480	400	380	390	
Abortions per hundred live births to women under age 20			23.7	29.5	35.8	30.2	39.1	20.7	25.1					

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Regional Monitoring Report, no. 7, and Regional Monitoring Report no. 8: A Decade of Transition, UNICEF, 2001. <http://www.unicef-icdc.org/presscentre/presskit/monee8/eng/>; and State of the World's Children 2002, UNICEF. <http://www.unicef.org/sowc02/>

Table 23 Life Expectancy and Mortality Rates²⁰⁶

	1980	1985	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Female life expectancy at birth (years)	72.2	73.9	75.5	75.4	75.4	74.3	74.3	75.6	74.3				76.4	
Male life expectancy at birth (years)	67.7	68.5	69.6	69.3	69.3	68.5	68.5	69.5	68.5				71.7	
Infant mortality rate (age 0-1 deaths per 1000 live births)	50.3	30.1	30.8	28.3	32.9	30.9	33.2	35.7	34.0	25.8	22.5	20.4	15.1	28
Under 5 mortality rate (deaths per 1000)			45.5	41.5	44.5	46.9	49.7	44.7	37.0	30.6	22.9	22.2	18.6	33
Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births)	45.2	57.6	49.5	37.7	29.7	25.2	16.2	40.2	33.3	27.8	27.5	21.6		
Maternal mortality per 100,000 aged 15-49				3.73	2.77	2.93	1.72	3.53	2.5	2.6	2.03			
Age 5-14 female mortality rate (per hundred thousand relevant population)			54.4	61.5	48.7	42.5	44.1	38.7	35.4	33.7				
Age 5-14 male mortality rate (per hundred thousand relevant population)			73.2	71.6	73.1	74.0	69.0	69.2	59.2	59.3				
Age 15-24 female mortality rate (per hundred thousand relevant population)			47.4	37.5	50.1	50.6	52.4	45.9	54.4	43.0				
Age 15-24 male mortality rate (per hundred thousand relevant population)			98.9	103.4	140.1	145.7	167.9	174.0	162.1	135.1				

Table 24 Diseases, Immunization, Medical Staff, Health Care and Infrastructure

Infectious Diseases and Immunization ²⁰⁷														
	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000		
Syphilis, new cases							3	3	17	36	30			
Gonorrhoea		130		98	14	52	20	11	7	5	11			
Viral hepatitis deaths per 10,000							7.7	7.3	5.5	8.9				
Tuberculosis, new cases per 100,000	21.5	20.0	19.5	16.7	20.0	17.0	20.3	21.5	20.0	20.4	20.3	21.5		
BCG immunization rate, % aged 0-1 immunized against Tuberculosis													79.6	
DPT immunization rate, % aged 0-2 immunized against diphtheria, pertussis & tetanus			77.6	94.0	95.8	96.3	97.1	98.1	98.6	96.0			70.7 (1 st dose)	
Polio immunization, % aged 0-2			82.5	87.0	97.5	97.2	97.8	99.6	99.1	97.0			57.3 (1 st dose)	
Measles immunization, % aged 0-2			80.5	87.0	76.2	81.2	91.0	91.7	95.1	89.0			61	
Medical Staff, 1998														
					Health Spending and Infrastructure									
	Hospital	PHC	Private	Total	Gov't health care spending, millions USD	0.85	3.21	3.63	6.53	5.55	3.68	2.52	7	
Physicians	1927	2398	180	4505	Gov't health care spending, millions Leks				5470	6078	6269	7985	12077	123334
Pharmacists	112	0	1096	1205	Gov't health care spending, % of total gov't spending				7	7	6	6	7	7
Dentists	0	297	1103	1400	Gov't health care spending, % of total GDP				2.4	2.2	1.8	1.7	2.3	2.2
					Hospitals			51	51	51	51	51	51	51
					Total beds			9661	10371	10319	10133	9480	10237	10197
					Total hospitalizations			281199	288856	289268	255203	250043	265321	260770

²⁰⁶ Regional Monitoring Report, no. 7, and Regional Monitoring Report no. 8: A Decade of Transition, UNICEF, 2001; National Conference of Public Health, 1999; and National Strategy of the Health System, Draft: 2000-2010, MoH and WHO, May 2000; and Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), Instat, 2000.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

Table 25 Marriages, Divorces, Infant Homes and Adoptions²⁰⁸

	1980	1985	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Crude marriage rate (marriages per thousand mid-year population)	8.1	8.5	8.6	8.9	7.7	8.3	8.2	8.6	8.3	8.4	7.2	8.3	8.1	
Average age of women at first marriage			22.8	22.6	22.2	2.22	22.3	22.6	23.0	23.4	23.5	23.6	23.5	
Average age of men at first marriage			26.7	26.7	26.7	26.6	26.7	27.3	27.8	28.4	28.5	29.1	29.2	
Crude divorce rate (divorces per thousand mid-year population)	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.4	0.6	0.6	
General divorce rate (divorces per 100 marriages)	9.9	10.6	9.5	9.2	9.0	8.9	8.7	7.6	8.6	6.9	5.9	7.2	7.8	
Children involved in divorce per 1000 aged 0-17			1.8	2.0	1.7		1.7	1.8	1.9	1.6	1.2	1.6	1.8	
No. of children in infant homes per hundred thousand age 0-3								62.4	80.2	79.9	87.7	69.7		
No. of children adopted per hundred thousand age 0-3								24.5	30.7	41.3	22.1			

Table 26 Literacy by Age Group and Region²⁰⁹

Age	North	Center	South	Urban	Rural	Total
50+	79.7	87.4	81.2	91.2	78.2	83.2
18-50	94.9	97.5	95.9	98.1	95.2	96.3

Table 27 Classroom Infrastructure²¹⁰

Educational institutions	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Elementary schools	1782	1797	1799	1803	1815
--Pupils per classroom	23	27	28	29	29
--Pupils per teacher	18	18	18	19	19
Middle schools	472	430	408	400	394
--Pupils per classroom	29	29	32	33	33
--Pupils per teacher	15	14	15	17	17
Universities	10	10	11	11	11

Table 28 Literacy rates comparisons

Literacy Rates	1998
Southeast Europe	93.2
Bulgaria	98.2
Romania	97.9
Former Yugoslavia	98.8
Croatia	98.0
Slovenia	99.6

Table 29 Funding schools, salaries, and training²¹¹

Budget expenditures for education	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
In million leks	8461	10310	11197	13612	15938	17192
In % of total government expenditures	11	12	11	10	10	10
In % of GDP	3.7	3.7	3.3	3	3.1	3.4

²⁰⁸ Regional Monitoring Report, no. 7, and Regional Monitoring Report no. 8: A Decade of Transition, UNICEF, 2001. <http://www.unicef-icdc.org/presscentre/presskit/monee8/eng/>

²⁰⁹ MICS, Instat, 2000.

²¹⁰ UNDP Human Development Report 2000 & Instat.

²¹¹ Social Indicators Yearbook, Instat, 2001.

Table 30 Total No. and Portion of Students who Dropped Out of School²¹²

	1990/1	1991/2	1992/3	1993/4	1994/5	1995/6	1996/7	1997/8	1998/9
Total	21710	34232	21532	20939	17134	17162	18300	19610	
%	3.9	6.31	4.09	4	3.11	3	3.2	3.5	3.01

Table 31 Natural Disaster Profile of Albania²¹³

Disaster	Year	Month	Dead	Hurt	Affected
Earthquake	67	11	11	134	134
Earthquake	79	4	35	350	350
Earthquake	80	7	0		
Earthquake	82	11	1	5	5,005
Avalanche	85	1	57	26	26
Earthquake	85	2	0		
Cold wave	85	3	68		7,085
Earthquake	88	1	0	0	690
Drought	91		0	0	3,200,000
Flood	92	11	11		35,000
Flood	95	9	4		1,500
Flood	95	12	0		2,000
Flood	97	12	0		8,000

Table 32 Intended Local Responsibility for Infrastructure and Public Services²¹⁴

Public infrastructure and services	Community social development and services
Water supply and sewage	Education
Road network	Public health
Waste management	Culture and tradition
Electric supply and public lighting	Social development
	Supporting social groups
Telecommunication	Local Economic Development
Public transport	Business development
Heating	Agriculture development
Urban planning and land management	Civil protection
Housing	Public order
	Civil protection

²¹² Drop-out Phenomenon for Elementary Education, MoES, April 2000.

²¹³ Natural Disaster Profile of Albania, 2001, <http://www.cred.be/emdat/profiles/countries/albania.htm>

²¹⁴ Strategy for Decentralization.

Table 33 Data on Transport and Telecommunication

Telephones lines ²¹⁵	End 1996	End 1997	End 1998	End 1999	2000 ²¹⁶
Total number of conventional lines	50000	82000	120000	140389	146776
Total number of 64k ISDN lines (subscriptions)	0	0	0	0	1000
Total number of mobile phone lines	2248	3076	4323	11009	29000
Total number of lines	52248	85076	124323	1513981	176776

Transportation ²¹⁷	1992	1996	2000
Number of motor cars per 1000 (state sector)	11	20	30
No. of bus routes per 1000 population (state sector)	1	2	5
No. of scheduled international flights	1945	3790	6302
No. of air passengers	87170	283010	408334
No. of passenger boats	0	1	2
Millions of passengers/km, urban roads (state sector)	231.9	223.395	183
Millions of passengers/km, railway	191.34	168.268	124.7

Table 34 Print Media Circulation²¹⁸

Print Media Circulation	Total	Copies Distributed	Subscribers
Newspapers:			
Daily	15	13842000	3,318
Biweekly	10	1509300	700
Weekly	35	2079080	2,905
Bimonthly	8	47200	4
Monthly	7	34300	115
Infrequent	16	13900	517
Magazines:			
Weekly	5	346800	120
Bimonthly	8	183400	149
Monthly	18	273300	2,150
Quarterly	14	32400	88
Other	10	83000	20

²¹⁵ Much more data available at <http://www.eu-esis.org/esis2basic/ALbasic7.htm>

²¹⁶ As of September, except for mobile phones which is for December.

²¹⁷ Social Indicators Yearbook, 2001, Instat.

²¹⁸ Monitoring Albania Media Landscape January –June 2001, Albanian Media Institute, 2001.

Table 35 Elections in Albania²¹⁹

	31 March 1991 Parl. c	March 1992 Parl. c	July 1992 Local c	Nov. 1994 Const. Ref. a	1996 Parl. c	1996 Local c	June/ July 1997 Parl. a	1998 Const. Ref. a	
General Details									
No. of registered voters	---	1,865,011	---	---	1,850,831	---	2,031,342c	---	2,329
No. of actual voters	---	1,685,037	---	---	1,647,240	---	1,308,023c	---	1,443
Voter turnout, a	59%a 98.92%c	95%a 90.35%c	70.5% a,c	75%	89.00% a,c	75%	66%a 72.96%c	52%	61.9
No. of spoiled ballots	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	97,2
No. of parties participating	11	11	---	n/a	---	---	19 ?c	n/a	4
Avg. age of deputies	---	---	---	n/a	---	---	52	n/a	--
No. of experienced deputies	---	---	---	n/a	---	---	27	n/a	--
Candidates participating	1,074	521	---	n/a	---	---	1091e	n/a	--
No. of positions available	250	---	---	n/a	140	---	155	n/a	--
Main Political Party Details									
APL/ Socialist Party Seats	169	38	---	n/a	10	---	101	n/a	--
--No. of votes, first round	---	433,602	---	n/a	335,400	---	690,000	n/a	--
--Portion of seats	67.6%	27.14%	---	n/a	7.00%	---	65.16%	n/a	--
--Portion of vote	56.17%	25.70%	41%	n/a	20.40%	31.3%	52.50%	n/a	--
Democratic Party Seats	75	92	---	n/a	122	---	23	n/a	--
--No. of votes, first round	---	1,046,193	---	n/a	914,218	---	336,000	n/a	--
--Portion of seats	30.0%	65.71%	---	n/a	87.00%	---	14.84%	n/a	--
--Portion of vote	38.71%	62.08%	43%	n/a	55.50%	52.5%	25.70%	n/a	--

²¹⁹ a) Nations in Transit, Freedom House, 2001; b) Central Electoral Commission (CEC) 2001 information package; c) Albania in Transition: The Rocky Road to Democracy, 1998, Elez Biberaj; d) Bulletin: The outcomes for the Local Government Election, October 2000, CEC; e) Bulletin: B12 The outcomes for the Local Government Election, June 1997, CEC.

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10.3 Composition and Organization of Thematic Groups

Thematic Group on Democratic Governance

Chair: UNDP

UN Agencies involved:

UNFPA, UNHCR, WHO, WFP, UN LO, WB, ILO, UNDCP, IFAD, FAO, UNIDO, UNOPS,

Non-UN partner: IOM

Thematic Group on Human Security

Chair: UNICEF

Agencies involved:

UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, WHO, WFP, UN LO, WB, UNESCO, ILO, UNDCP, WHO LO;

Non-UN partner: IOM

Four meetings per thematic group were organized, for a total of 8 meetings, and there were an additional two general workshops with representatives of UN agencies to determine the main issues to be addressed in the CCA document and the process to be followed.

Participants from both thematic groups were active in giving their suggestions and recommendations on the specific issues addressed in the CCA, as well as with the information they provided to us.

January 18th, 2001 – A Common Country Assessment Workshop for Civil Society, Government Representatives and the UN Country Team in Albania was organized. Participants were very active in discussing the CCA process, the Millennium Development Goals, and ways to address them in

the Albanian context.

January 23rd, 2001 – A meeting was held to discuss further steps in the CCA process. Participants discussed the third draft of the CCA presented at the National Conference/Workshop held on January 18th, 2001. It was decided that the CCA document would be restructured taking into consideration the concept of “Human Security” and Millennium Development Goals.

10.4 UN Agencies on the Internet

UN Development Programme (UNDP)

<http://www.undp.org>
<http://www.undp.org.al/>
www.weaponsfreealbania.org

UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF)

<http://www.unicef.org>
<http://www.unicef.org/albania/>

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

<http://www.unhcr.ch/>

UN Population Fund (UNFPA)

<http://www.unfpa.org/>

World Health Organization (WHO)

<http://www.who.int/>
<http://www.who.dk/eprise/main/WHO/countryinformation/country?AreaCode=ALB>

UN Liaison Office (UN LO)

<http://www.un.org>

World Bank (WB)

<http://www.worldbank.org/>

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

<http://www.imf.org/>

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

<http://www.iom.int>
<http://www.iomtirana.org.al/>

International Labour Organization (ILO)

<http://www.ilo.org/>

World Food Programme (WFP)

<http://www.wfp.org/>
http://www.wfp.org/country_brief/index.asp?continent=3

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

<http://www.ifad.org/>

UN Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

<http://www.unesco.org/>

UN Drug Control Programme (UNDCP)

<http://www.undcp.org/>

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

<http://www.fao.org/>

10.5 Other Web Sites of Interest

Stabilization and Association Process with the European Union

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/see/albania/index.htm

CARDS Assistance Program to the Western Balkans: European Commission.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/sp/index.htm

Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe

<http://www.stabilitypact.org/>

Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS)

<http://www.minfin.gov.al/initiatives/gprs/gprsindex.html>

A Qualitative Assessment of Poverty in 10 Areas of Albania

http://www.minfin.gov.al/initiatives/gprs/documents/qualitative/docs/QA_2001_final.pdf

Homepage of the President of the Republic of Albania

<http://president.gov.al/>

Government of Albania, Council of Ministers

<http://depinf.gov.al/english/default1.htm>

Albanian Parliament

<http://www.parlament.al/english/eng-ver.html>

Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

<http://www.mfa.gov.al/>

CIA World Factbook - Albania

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/al.html>

USAID information on Albania

<http://www.usaid.gov/countries/al/> and <http://www.dec.org/country/index.cfm>

Economic Reconstruction and Development in South East Europe

<http://www.seerecon.org/Albania/Albania.htm>

IMF information on Albania

<http://www.imf.org/external/country/ALB/index.htm>

<http://dsbb.imf.org/gddsweb/country/albindex.htm>

CEEBICnet (The Central and Eastern Europe Business Information Center)

<http://www.mac.doc.gov/eebic/countryr/albania>

10.6 Acronyms

ACAC	Albanian Coalition Against Corruption
ACER	Albanian Center for Economic Research
ACMG	Anti-Corruption Monitoring Group
AHC	Albanian Helsinki Committee
AHRG	Albanian human Rights Group
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ATP	Autonomous Trade Preferences
BCG	Bacille Calmette-Guerin
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEC	Central Elections Commission
CIS	Commonwealth of the Independent States
CRCA	Children's Human Rights Center of Albania
CSR	Convention on the Status of Refugees
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DPT	Diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus vaccine
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Commission
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EEA	European Environmental Agency
EIB	European Investment Bank
EPI	Expanded Program on Immunization
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GED	Group of Experts for Decentralization
GDI	Gender Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
GPRS	Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy
HBV	Hepatitis B vaccine
HDPC	Human Development Promotion Center
HDR	Human Development Report
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICMC	International Catholic Migration Commission
ICS	Institute of Contemporary Studies
IDU	Injecting Drug User
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IHF	International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INSTAT	National Institute of Statistics
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPH	Institute of Public Health
KAPB	Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices and Beliefs
KESH	Albanian Energy Corporation
LCS	Living Conditions Survey
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoLSA	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
MoPO	Ministry of Public Order
MSI	Management Systems International
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework

NAP	National AIDS Program
NCD	National Committee for Decentralization
NEAP	National Environmental Action Plan
NEHAP	National Environmental Health Action Plan
NES	National Employment Service
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OPV	Oral poliovirus vaccine
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PIP	Public Investment Program
PRSC	Poverty Reduction Strategy Credits
RAR	Rapid Assessment and Response
REA	Regional Environmental Agency
RERP	Regional Environmental Reconstruction Program
SAA	Stabilization and Association Agreement
SAP	Stabilization and Association Process
SCEO	State Committee on Equal Opportunities
SCWF	State Committee for Women and Family
SEE	South-East Europe
SEECF	Southeast Europe Cooperation Process
SELDI	Southeast European Legal Development Initiative
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SOE	State of the Environment
SP	Stability Pact
SPOC	Stability Pact Initiative against Organized Crime
STI	Sexually transmitted Infection
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDCP	United Nations Drug Control Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNLO	United Nations Liaison Office
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNTG	United Nations Theme Group
USD	United States Dollars
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization



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2002