



ALBANIA AND THE UNITED NATIONS

60 Years of Partnership





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On 14 December 2015, the Republic of Albania will mark the 60th anniversary of its admission to the United Nations. On that day, Albania became a member of the UN together with fifteen other countries: Jordan, Ireland, Portugal, Hungary, Italy, Austria, Romania, Bulgaria, Finland, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), Nepal, Libya, Cambodia, Laos and Spain.

Albania's membership in the United Nations represents an important milestone in its international recognition and confirmation as part of the World family. Since then, Albania has assumed its duties and responsibilities and has progressively become a member of several funds, programmes, specialised agencies, related organisations and other entities, part of the UN system.

Until 1990, Albania's presence to the UN has reflected the policy marked by the self-isolation of the communist regime. The democratic changes brought a profound review of Albania's relations with the world, including the United Nations. During the last 25 years, Albania has gradually increased its performance within the UN system and has fully embodied the goals

and objectives of the UN in its strategic plans, national programmes and action plans.

Albania is now a member of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and has served and it is still serving in the governing bodies of several programmes and specialised agencies.

On 21 October 2014, Albania was elected member of the Human Rights Council, for the period 2015-2017. An important recognition of the progress Albania has made in the areas of human rights and democratic society, its presence in the Council is also a privileged opportunity to contribute to the advancement and promotion of human rights worldwide.

With its role in the area of disarmament, fight against terrorism and violent extremism, with its marked contribution to regional cooperation, security and stability, with its outstanding tradition of cultural and religious tolerance, Albania is now a prominent member of the UN and is preparing its candidature to the UN Security Council for a non-permanent seat, during 2022-2023.

I would like to thank the UN system for the assistance and support granted to Albania during the last

foreword

25 years of intensive cooperation to promote a more transparent and accountable governance, greater participation in public policy and decision making, increased and more equitable access to quality basic services; regional development and reduced disparities; environmentally sustainable development; poverty reduction, improvement of business climate, strengthening of democratic institutions; population and reproductive health issues; gender equality, empowerment of women and rights of disadvantaged individuals and groups. The United Nations has been a partner for change and a force for good in Albania.

Today, the UN's activity in Albania is embedded in the Delivering as One approach, which Albania has been actively promoting at the United Nations, and is fully aligned with the country's National Strategy for Development and Integration. We look forward to strengthening our cooperation in the years to come as Albania makes continued progress to implement its project of European Union Integration.



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Albania and the United Nations

The UN was founded in 1945 to maintain international peace and security, to develop friendly relations among nations, to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems and to be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations. Currently the UN comprises 193 Member States.

The Republic of Albania became a member of the UN on 14 December 1955. Since then Albania has been working to advance its interests in this global body. The shift of Albanian political course towards democratization and pluralism in the early 1990s was accompanied by an invigorated role and new responsibilities within the UN system, in particular with respect to the maintenance of peace and stability, protection of human rights and promotion of sustainable development.

Participation and advocacy of Albania's national interests and contribution to the UN and its system organizations is ensured by its diplomatic missions – Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York, Geneva and Vienna, to the Food and Agriculture Organization, to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and to the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Based on its foreign policy priorities, Albania contributes actively in the United Nations' work in the follow-

ing fields: maintenance and strengthening of international peace and security, fight against international terrorism, full respect, protection and promotion of human rights, sustainable development, achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and of the new Sustainable Development Goals, disarmament and nonproliferation, reform of the United Nations, particularly the System-Wide Coherence reform and enhancement of the overall UN system activities.

Albania has participated to several UN peacekeeping operations by continuously increasing its troop contribution and took part in other international efforts towards strengthening peace in the world by joining all UN initiatives to fight against terrorism and combat extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism.

In the field of humanitarian assistance, the Republic of Albania has promptly responded to severe humanitarian situations across the globe, notably by specific contributions to the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).



Albania has an unbroken record of service to blue-helmet peacekeeping - Photo Credit: LSA Photography

Albania contributing to a UN fit for purpose

Albania has been very committed in the efforts to achieve System-Wide Coherence. As a pilot country of the Delivering as One approach since 2007, Albania has brought its contribution to a reform process that is advancing more relevance, effectiveness and coherence of the UN development activities on the ground.

The conclusions of the 5th Intergovernmental Conference on Delivering as One, held in Tirana in June 2012, otherwise known as the “Tirana Spirit”, further guided UN Member States in moving forward the Delivering as One approach at the country level, thus opening the way for a more comprehensive reform process at the UN system-wide level.

Albania’s contribution to the United Nations

As a member of Human Rights Council (2015-17) Albania fully believes that the Human Rights Council and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights are cornerstones of the international system for the protection of human rights. In Albania’s view, the Council is a living instrument through which human rights are promoted and protected worldwide. Albania continues to duly cooperate and support the Council’s subsidiary bodies and mechanisms. In December 2009 Albania has extended a standing invitation to all special procedures and it is convinced that their expertise, professionalism and independence can further strengthen national action and contribute to the implementation of international obligations. Desirous to increase its overall contribution within

Some key moments of Albania in the United Nations

17 December 1920

With 35 votes in favor and none against, Albania was admitted to the League of Nations. Through this act the international community has fully recognized Albania as a sovereign and independent state.

1920-1967 and 1991 and on

Albania was a member of the International Labour Organization (ILO). Albania has ratified 53 ILO Conventions, 46 out of which are still in force, ensuring respect for minimum labour standards.

25 October 1971

The UN General Assembly adopted resolution 2758 which recognised the People's Republic of China as the sole representative of China in the UN, by replacing the Republic of China.

November 1973

Albania becomes a member of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

August 1975

FAO's Ceres Medal is awarded to Mother Theresa in recognition of her "exemplary love and concern for the hungry and the poorest of the poor".

1993

A five-year FAO project starts to support Albania transforming its central planning agriculture into a market-oriented one.

1994

During the deliberations of the 3rd UN Committee, the Albanian delegation to the UN prepared, introduced and was the main sponsor of the UN General Assembly resolution on the "Situation of Human Rights in Kosovo", which was adopted with a clear majority of the UN membership during the 49th session of the UN General Assembly. Thereafter, this resolution was consecutively adopted by the UN General Assembly during its 50th, 51st, 52nd, 53rd and 54th sessions with an overwhelming majority.

1920

1930

1940

1950

1960

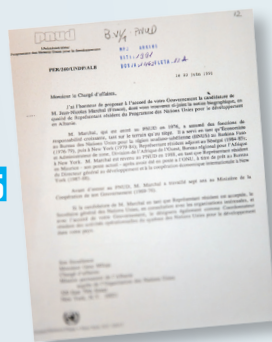
1970

14 December 1955

Albania becomes a member of United Nations Organization.

1958

Albania becomes a member of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).



12-13 May 1990

UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Kuelar visited Albania.

1991

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was the first United Nations Agency to establish its mission in Albania.

1992

The Archeological Site of Butrinti was registered in the UNESCO World Heritage List. Albania ratifies the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

1994

On 11 May 1994, the instrument of accession by the Government of Albania to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment was deposited with the UN Secretary-General.

1995

The Permanent Representative of the Republic of Albania to the UN was elected Vice President of the 50th session of the UN General Assembly.

1998-2002

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, formerly UNDCP) started its activities in Albania by launching a project aimed at institution-building on Improvement of Control Measures and Enhance Cooperation among Drug related Institutions to develop a multidisciplinary sustainable law enforcement assistance project that combines equipment and technical assistance and expert advisors through training courses to develop and strengthen cooperation between agencies.

1980

1999

More than 500,000 refugees from Kosovo received protection and assistance from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).
5,200 families from Albania in Kukes, hosting refugees during the Kosovo's crisis, received basic agricultural goods from FAO in 1999.

2004

UNHCR assisted the Albanian Government to introduce pre-screening procedures to help identify asylum seekers and victims of trafficking entering the country.

2005

Albania was elected for the first time member of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for the term 2005-2007. In 2006 Albania served as Vice President of the ECOSOC.

2006

Albania was elected member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Governing Board for the term 2007-09.
26 April 2006: Albania ratifies the World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

15 June 2007

Albania was one of the WHO member states to sign the international health regulations.
Albania was elected for the first time member of the UNESCO Executive Council for the term 2007-2009.

1990

2000

2010

2015

October 21, 2014

Albania was elected member of the UN Human Rights Council for the term 2015-17 and Vice-President of its Bureau for the year 2015.
Albania has also been elected member of:

- Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) for the term 2011-13;
- Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for the term 2012-15;
- Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for the term 2012-14
- International Law Commission for the term 2012-16;
- United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) for the term 2013-19;
- Executive Board of the World Health Organization (WHO) for the term 2013-16;
- Executive Board of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for the term 2013-17.

December 2009

Albania signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

2012

Albania was elected for the second time member of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for the term 2013-15. In 2013 Albania served as Vice President of the ECOSOC.

2014

Albania becomes the first - and the only country - to offer asylum to Iranian refugees living in unsafe conditions in Iraq.

2015

FAO's permanent office opens in Tirana.
Albania has presented its candidacy for a non-permanent seat of the UN Security Council for the term 2022-23, which fully manifests the responsibility, willingness and readiness of the Republic of Albania to substantially contribute for the maintenance of peace and strengthen the security around the world.

the United Nations' system, Albania has presented its candidature for a non-permanent seat to the UN Security Council for the term 2022-23. The elections will be held in the General Assembly in 2021. If elected, it will be the first time Albania serves in this Council. Albania is committed to strengthening international action through the United Nations to achieve collective security and uphold the goals enshrined in the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. As a non-permanent member of the Security Council, Albania hopes to make concrete and effective contributions to the work of the Council and the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security.

United Nations in Albania

Over the past 2 decades Albania's relations with the UN have changed radically from a formal representation into cooperation in the interest of democratic governance, implementation of international standards, increased civic participation, closing of gender gaps, health and labor standards, increased public access to information and communication technology, environment protection, support for the rights of children and human rights in general.

The Government of Albania – United Nations Programme of Cooperation 2012-2016, signed on 24 October 2011, brings together the support of 19 UN agencies, funds and programmes, plus the International Organization for Migration, to Albania's development priorities.

As the overarching programme document for the United Nations in Albania, the Programme of Cooperation 2012-2016 builds upon United Nations values, the comparative advantages of participating funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations, and lessons learned from previous coopera-

tion. It supersedes the first One UN programme, with a single, coherent plan for all UN agencies in Albania, in which each is responsible for delivery on a set of key actions that jointly contribute to shared results. The Programme of Cooperation 2012-2016 promotes sustainable and equitable development, social inclusion, the adherence to international norms, and fulfilment of international obligations in support of national priorities and European Union integration aspirations. The result of intensive consultations with line ministries, civil society and development partners in the course of 2011, the Programme focuses on governance and rule of law, economy and environment, regional and local development and inclusive social policies.

The Programme of Cooperation 2012-2016 is signed by the following participating agencies, funds and programmes: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Trade Center (ITC), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Volunteers (UNV), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and World Health Organization (WHO), plus the International Organization for Migration (IOM).



Gjirokastra, UNESCO World Heritage Site

Albania in UNESCO

1958: Albania becomes member of the UNESCO.

1992: The Archeological Site of Butrinti was registered in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

2005: Albania also registered:

- Gjirokastra town in the UNESCO World Heritage List;
- Folk Iso-polyphony in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural List;
- Berati Codex Purpled in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register.

1995: The General Director of UNESCO, Mr. Federico Major, visited Albania.

2007: Albania was elected for the first time member of the UNESCO Executive Council for the term 2007-2009.

2012: Albania was elected for the second time member of the Executive Board of UNESCO for the term 2013-17.

Albania and the fight against terrorism

- ❖ Albania has joined any UN initiatives that aim at fighting against terrorism, violent extremism and foreign fighters. Albania has signed and ratified all twelve United Nations anti-terrorist conventions and protocols relating to terrorism. Albania supports the work of the UN Security Council and the obligations, which derive from the resolutions of the UN Security Council, on the fight against terrorism and has implemented them. Albania considers terrorism as one of the priorities on its political agenda. The Albanian counter-terrorism policy is guided by respect for human rights, effective law enforcement and full international co-operation.

Albania and disarmament

2001: Albania has signed the 2001 UN Plan of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

1998- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in cooperation with the Albanian Government piloted a project called ‘Weapons in Exchange for Development’. The programme aimed to reduce firearms related accidents as well as violence and crime linked to weapons possession. Instead of offering individual rewards to people handing weapons, the project offered collective incentives in the form of community-based development projects by providing development assistance to poor communities and encouraging such communities to tackle their problems in a constructive and cooperative way. The Programme helped significantly reduce small arms and light weapons in society and also raise awareness about the social and economic impact of arms in society.



Hollywood actor Michael Douglas acting in his capacity as a UN Messenger of Peace 'Weapons in exchange for development', Albania 11-12/10/99

2001-2004: UNDP in partnership with the Government of Albania, launched a program to support the security sector reform (SSSR) in Albania. The programme was a grassroots community based policing initiative that aimed to improve public order at the local level, strengthening police capacities, promote a positive police image and the role of the police as a provider of public services, as well as to enhance mutual trust in social cohesion.

July 11, 2007: Albania fulfils its obligations as a state party to the UN Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction, so becoming the first country worldwide to declare itself free of chemical weapons.

2008- Albania ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.

November 2009: Albania fulfils its obligation as a state party to the UN Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction and declared itself as a mine-free country.

November 2010: Albania fulfils its obligations as a state party to the UN Convention on Cluster Munitions and declared itself as cluster munition free country.

December 4, 2009: Albania was elected to take over the Presidency of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention from the 10-th Meeting of the States Parties in 2010 until its 11-th meeting in November 2011. The selection of Albania by the States Parties for the 10th Presidency of the Convention is an appreciation of Albania's strong support and commitment in the international work under this convention.

2010: Albania was the main sponsor of the UN General Assembly resolution A/RES/65/48 on Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

Albania and development

2000: Albania is fully involved, in close cooperation with the UN system in Albania, to implement the 8 Millennium Development Goals. After discussion with different political and social actors the Albanian Government decided to add another goal, that of good governance (e-governance).

2007: Albania volunteered to become one of 8 Delivering as One pilot countries, a process which was built on a broader UN reform to increase the coherence and effectiveness of UN operations in the field.

June 27-29, 2012: 5th High Level Intergovernmental Conference on Delivering as One took place in Tirana, Albania. Tirana Conference took stock of the findings and conclusions of the Independent evaluation and on that basis, taking also into account lessons learned, prepared a common position of the pilot countries and self-starters, which was presented by Albania to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) during its substantive session of July and then to the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR), in fall. Albania managed to bring a strong voice of the pilots, the self-starters, without excluding the Development partners and those at the UN who see this approach as a new way of making business, as a new coordinated way of maximizing impact and bringing desired results in a world that has still huge and different development needs, in the light of approaching the deadline for reaching the Millennium Development Goals and in planning a post 2015 sustainable development agenda.

Albania and human rights

October 21, 2014: Albania was elected member of the UN Human Rights Council for the term 2015-17 and Vice-President of its Bureau for the year 2015. As a member of the Human Rights Council, Albania strongly supports the respect for human rights and their universality. This membership is an expression of Albania's achievements based on the principles of freedom, human rights and democracy that almost a quarter-century ago seemed impossible. It inspires Albania to firmly continue this path, as our only alter-



Children enjoying their new kindergarten in Berat

native in building an open and democratic society.

- Albania has ratified 261 UN Human Rights Conventions.
- The Republic of Albania has ratified or accessed in a number of international conventions on human rights and periodically (every 3-5 years) submit national reports to the 8 main HR Conventions. In the framework of accomplishing the engagement that comes from the international instruments for the human rights, during the period 2002 and at present, the Republic of Albania has presented the respective periodic reports, and the Report related to the Mechanisms of Universal Periodic Review (UPR), in the years 2009 and 2014.
- The UN agencies in partnership with the gov-

ernment work to advance social and economic inclusion in Albania through supporting policies and implementation measures designed to avoid exclusion by helping to remove barriers that stand in the way of people realizing their full capabilities.

- UNDP, under the overall One UN Programme, and in close partnership with the Government of Albania and the civil society, assists Albania with complying with the requirements of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and moving forward towards the social inclusion of persons with disabilities.
- The UN Gender Equality Program supports the implementation of appropriate policies and mechanisms that promote human rights and advance women's empowerment.
- The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has been operating in Albania since 1992 supporting the country's efforts to harness the potential benefits of migration towards national development. IOM cooperates with the Albanian government to:
 - Support the full implementation of the country's policy on migration;
 - Seek ways of assisting Albanian migrants whenever possible.

Albania and the peacekeeping operations

Since the fall of the communist regime in the early 1990s, Albania has gradually increased its modest contribution to international peace operations. Albania's primary contribution to peacekeeping is provided through NATO, the EU and the UN, as well as joint coalitions with strategic partners. The primary reason for contributing to peacekeeping has been Albania's obligation derived from its UN and NATO membership, with the intention of increasing its international role, strengthening

strategic partnerships, and transforming its international image and position.

1993: Albania sent two military observers in Georgia, in framework of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG), established by the UN Security Council resolution 856 (1993). The Albanian military observers were part of a force of 88 observers from 23 UN member states. The UNOMIG terminated its mandate in 2009 and during the whole period of its operation Albania has sent 39 military officers, in total, to serve as military observers in Georgia.

Albania participated in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), a NATO-led security mission in Afghanistan, established by the UN Security Council resolution 1386 (2001) with 211 troops. As of June 2014, Albania has 72 troops as part of ISAF in Afghanistan.

2004: An Albanian company from its armed forces participated in Bosnia and Hercegovina as part of the EUFOR Althea operation mission established by the UN Security Council resolution 1551 (2004).

2009: Albania participated with a company from its armed forces, 189 troops, under the auspices and in framework of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT), established by the UN Security Council resolution 1778 (2007). The Albanian troops stayed in Chad from April 2009 until June 30, 2010.

2014: Albania participated with police experts from the Albanian State Police in the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), a peacekeeping operation established by the UN Security Council resolution 1996 (2011).

- Albania provided 215 troops between 2003 and 2008 in Iraq as part of the US-led Joint Coalition.



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