

Thank you for giving survivors the opportunity to express our views. I would like to start with to start with my own personal story...

- Accident and aftermath (prosthesis...)
- Employment
- Married with 2 kids

I had the opportunity to work on MRE with Alb-Aid. When that job ended, I received training to start my own business in insemination of cows. With ITF and government support, I was able to get the equipment and materials to set up my own business, which is now successful. An initial opportunity, appropriate training, and ongoing support were all critical to my success. I was able to choose what I wanted to do based on my past experience and my knowledge of what type of business could work in the region. I was lucky to be supported by the government to turn my goal into a reality. My experience should teach a lesson to others. Governments should be responsive to the needs of the individual survivors and make sure that initial training and support programs are based on these needs. But also, governments need to make sure there is timely follow-up assistance to ensure continuing success of this chosen initiative.

I was also lucky be interested in cattle-breeding, which is an activity that receives support from the Albanian government. But governments need to make sure that other survivor-driven initiatives receive the necessary support over the long-term so that other peoples' dreams can become reality too that would create and support sustainability of such programmes. In addition to government responsibility there still remains needed for international support for such and similar income-generating and employment activities.

I would also like to emphasize the importance of accessibility to my success story. Albania has a regional hospital near the mine-affected area, so that when I was injured I was able to get quickly to a hospital. When I needed a prosthesis, Alb-Aid and AMAE through ITF sent me first to Tirana, and then to Ljubljana. Now, as we saw yesterday, the Kukes hospital has a prosthesis workshop so people do not need to travel so far. But I am grateful that before such local facilities were available, I was able to travel to get a good prosthesis, all free of charge. This has made all the difference to my life.

I will now give the floor to Zelko to speak about his perspective on the importance of peer support in the implementation of the mine ban treaty and other international obligations.

Thank you