STATEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN ALBANIA
(to deliver during the 42nd session of the Human Rights Council: 9-27 September 2019)

Dear members of the Human Rights Council,

- In this address I will start with what we as Ombudsman Institution consider should be the top priority of all and any society: the protection of children's rights! Improvements must be made in respect of:
  - adoption of a comprehensive realistic budget to address the children's needs;
  - development of inclusive social policies at the local level;
  - capacity building of the responsible authorities to effective implement children's rights;
  - establishment of specialized services for sexually abused children, and
  - making the school system fully accessible for children with disabilities.

- Although the legal framework and the sensitivity of society towards people with disabilities has improved in recent years, this category still faces discrimination in employment, education, access to buildings, public services, and independent living.

- The property issue in Albania remains a problem. Legislation does not give proper solution for the restitution and compensation of property. Constantly legal framework related to expropriations is not followed. The execution of European Court of Human Rights judgements continues to be problematic.

- Gender-based violence, especially violence against women in the family, remains a widespread phenomenon. Creation of new shelters, consolidation of referral mechanisms, increasing access to justice, as well as prosecuting domestic violence in full force of law should be a priority.
• Despite constant improvements, the situation of the prisons system continues to face problems related to poor infrastructure and living conditions, health care as well as overcrowding.

• The Ombudsman plays a crucial role in democratic societies. In this respect, the need to strengthen our human and financial capacities as well as implementation of our recommendations, are and remain a constant effort.

Erinda BALLANCA

PEOPLES’ ADVOCATE OF ALBANIA

Tirana 28/08/2019