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USAID/Albania Selects the Center for International Rehabilitation to Provide Disability Training in Ireland:

A program to promote the rights of Albanians with disabilities

CHICAGO (February 25, 2008)— After a competitive selection process, The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)/Albania has selected the Center for International Rehabilitation (CIR) as the training provider for their FORECAST Third Country training. This training program will educate Albanian disability delegates on effective strategies to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in Albania's mainstream society.

The training will take place March 2 - 9, 2008 and will consist of intensive workshops and site visits that will take place in Ireland. Ireland is an ideal showcase for this program considering that over the past 15 years there have been many opportunities that have opened for people with disabilities regarding access to education, employment and services.

“The situation in Albania is the typical experience of many people with disabilities worldwide, lack of access to transport, assistance with community living means disabled people remain on the margins of society,” says International Coordinator Mary Keogh. *“This generous award will allow us to work with a group of disability advocates and government official in Albania to build expertise on strategies to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities.”*

The methodology to be used in the training will ensure maximum interaction between the participants and the presenters. Each day will balance direct input by experts (i.e. Disabled Persons Organization's (DPOs), service providers and state institutions) with interactive site visits which will give an opportunity to observe the operation of disability services in Ireland.

Participants will have the benefit of the CIR's years of advocacy experience and success. It has extensive practice in the delivery and implementation of international training programs to a wide variety of groups. This experience includes: managing multiple international educational programs including the implementation and planning of more than 40 short-term rehabilitation workshops; working with world renowned Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago and Northwestern University and others to establish centers of excellence; developing and delivering an internationally recognized prosthetics training curriculum to students from developing countries; integrating follow-up and verification procedures to ensure a continuum of learning; and utilizing a tele-consultation application to connect specialty physicians with medical professionals in the field.

As a result of this training program, participants will be able to take away a toolkit of ideas they can use to develop effective disability-related programs in Albania.

The Center for International Rehabilitation, based in Chicago, is a not-for-profit Non-Governmental Organization that seeks to improve the lives of people with disabilities in countries affected by war by providing rehabilitation and training programs and mobility aides, and advocating for the rights of people with disabilities worldwide. For more information on the programs of the CIR, please visit our website at www.cirnetwork.org.

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