



PRESS RELEASE

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Photograph competition launched to mark United Nations Day of Disabled Persons

25th October 2007, Bangkok – The International Labour Organization, Disabled Peoples' International and Irish Aid are jointly organizing an Asia-Pacific photograph competition under the theme **“Decent Work for Persons with Disabilities”** to raise awareness of the United Nations International Day of Disabled Persons on the 3rd December 2007. The competition is open to everyone aged over 18 residing in the Asia-Pacific Region and has a first prize of US\$1,000. The closing date for entries is noon on the 21st November 2007.

The competition has been created with the aim of promoting an understanding within the Asia-Pacific region of people with disabilities and their right to decent work. Photographs must include disabled people in the work environment, including those who are self-employed, and be linked to the concept of decent work or of people advocating their rights to decent work. "Decent work" is productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity and has also been defined by Mr. Juan Somavia, Director General, ILO, as “work that meets people's basic aspirations, not only for income, but for security for themselves and their families, without discrimination or harassment, and providing equal treatment for women and men with and without a disability.”

Entries for the competition will only be accepted in digital format and must have a file size of no less than 1 megabyte. Photographs should be no more than 2 years old, and must not have won prizes in any other photographic competition. Submissions must include a caption explaining the disability of the subject and the link to “decent work”.

Judging will be carried by a panel of experts comprising leading photographers, the International Labour Organization, Disabled People's International, employers', trade union and disabled persons' representatives. Judges will give equal weighting to pictures of people with physical disabilities and non-physical disabilities. More information on the competition, submission form and full terms and conditions are available via the competition website www.jigsaw-communications.com/ILO

Ms Sachiko Yamamoto, Regional Director, International Labour Organization said, “The International Labour Organization is working to raise awareness of disabled people's contribution to the workplace and their rights to decent work, particularly in light of the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by the General Assembly last year. This is the first human rights convention of the 21st Century and marks a major step forward for disabled persons in all aspects of life, including work”.

Debra Perry, Senior Specialist in Disability, ILO, said “Of course the ILO has been promoting decent work for disabled persons and ratification and implementation of ILO Convention concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) No.159 for many years and we are encouraging countries to ratify the UN Convention as well. We hope this photo competition will bring new and positive awareness and put human faces to the millions of disabled persons who contribute to

their countries' workforce and economy every day. There is a huge untapped potential of disabled persons."

Saowalak Thongkuay, Regional Development Officer, Disabled Peoples' International said, "This competition is an excellent opportunity to promote the rights of disabled people to work and show that they are also capable of contributing. With more than 400 million disabled people, of which, about 250 million are of working age, this is not an insignificant group. Issues of disability that relate to decent work are also relevant to society in general where the physical and cultural environment, housing and transportation, social and health services, educational and work opportunities, cultural and social life, including sports and recreational facilities, should be made accessible to all. To support this competition we are promoting it through our offices across the region and in some cases organizing local national competitions with separate prize money."

The "Decent Work for Persons with Disabilities" photograph competition will be open for submissions from the 25th October to the 21st November 2007, with all submissions to be made via the competition website: www.jigsaw-communications.com/ilo or by mail on CD to: International Labour Organization Photograph Contest, Jigsaw Communications, 32 Sukhumvit Soi 19, Wattana, Bangkok 10110, Thailand. The competition winners will be announced at a press conference and Awards Ceremony to be held in Bangkok on the 29th November.

The International Labour Organization

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is the United Nations agency devoted to advancing opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Its main aims are to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue in handling work-related issues. The ILO is also the global body responsible for drawing up and overseeing international labour standards. The ILO's unique tripartite structure brings together representatives of governments, employers and workers to jointly shape its policies and programmes.

Disabled Peoples' International

Disabled Peoples' International (DPI) is a world cross-disability, self-help, human rights organizations of persons with disabilities established in 1981. We have been promoting full-participation and equalization of opportunity of persons with disabilities by delivering "A voice of our own." We hold special consultative status for the United Nations and have collaborated with many other international agencies as well. Disabled Peoples' International Asia-Pacific Region has been playing an important role in the disability movement of Asia-Pacific Region.

Irish Aid

Irish Aid is the Government of Ireland's programme of assistance to developing countries. Ireland has had an official development assistance programme since 1974. It has grown steadily over the years from modest beginnings to its current size (total ODA in 2007 is €813). Ireland's development cooperation policy is an integral part of Ireland's wider foreign policy. Our aid philosophy is rooted in our foreign policy, in particular its objectives of peace and justice. Our development cooperation policy and programme reflect our longstanding commitment to human rights and fairness in international relations and are inseparable from Irish foreign policy as a whole.

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Disability in Asia Pacific Fact Sheet

Facts:

- There are approximately 400 million disabled people in the Asia and Pacific region; of which 250 million are of working age
- Eighty per cent of persons with disabilities live in developing countries, according to the UN Development Programme (UNDP)
- Only 10 per cent of children with disabilities are estimated to attend primary school in the region (UNESCO)
- Disabled people are often excluded from training and workplaces
- The majority of disabled people live in rural areas (70 to 80 per cent)
- Disabled people are more likely to be unemployed - about 50 per cent in countries like Australia and up to 90 per cent in other developing countries
- People with disabilities account for 20 per cent of the world's poor

How is disability defined?

ILO Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983:

“Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”

Disability as a human rights issue

Due to social and other barriers, people with disabilities are often denied access to the training and employment services they need to succeed to have full participation in society. It is society rather than their impairment that leads to disability. When barriers are removed, most people with disabilities can work and contribute to their country's economy.

Disability and decent work is a human rights issue, based on the concept that people with disabilities are citizens like non-disabled people; they have been denied their rights; and they represent an enormous untapped potential.

The United Nations recognizing the severity of the issue passed the **“Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”** in Dec 2006.

In addition, the International Labour Organization headquarters and regional offices are urging countries to ratify both the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and ILO Convention 159 “Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983”, which calls for countries to have a policy on vocational rehabilitation and employment promotion.

For more information on Persons with Disabilities and the right to decent work please visit the following web sites:

- **Decent Work** - www.ilo.org/global/themes/decentwork
- **United Nations Enable web site** - www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/iddp2007.htm
- **Disabled People's International** – www.dpiap.org
- **Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983** www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C159
- **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** – www.un.org/disabilities/convention/index.shtml
- **ILO Ability Asia** – www.ilo/abilityasia