



StreetNet News No. 6 September 2005

Newsletter of StreetNet International, an international federation formed to promote and protect the rights of street vendors. Address: N228 Diakonia Centre, 20 St Andrews Street, Durban 4001 South Africa. e-mail stnet@iafrica.com Visit the website for the electronic version of StreetNet News and backcopies.

New on the web: Street vendors in Asia - Focus www.streetnet.org.za

Contents:

- **Zimbabwe crackdown on street vendors and the informal economy: StreetNet responds...page 1**
 - **Street Vendors confront military police in Sao Paulo...page 3**
 - **From best practice to Pariah: the case of Durban, South Africa...page 5**
 - **Urban alliances in Kenya form national alliance to represent street traders' interests...page 8**
 - **Street vendors in Nepal take refuge in NEST...page 10**
 - **Zambia: management of markets through cooperatives...page 11**
 - **Exchange visits: Korean and Indian street vendor organisations learn from each other...page 13**
-

Zimbabwe crackdown on street vendors and the informal economy: StreetNet responds

StreetNet received an alert from Elijah Mutemeri, an organiser for Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economy Associations (ZCIEA), on 13th May 2005 that the "ZCTU offices were raided by police". Mutemeri wrote, "the police turned everything upside down in all Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Union (ZCTU) offices including my office. They are actually trying to say the informal economy association is a political party." It was clear that the latest crackdown target of the Zimbabwe government was the newly-formed ZCIEA. A week later media reports and more messages from Mutemeri confirmed that informal traders were the target of one of the worst campaigns of repression yet seen in Zimbabwe since independence.

The ZCIEA represents 4404 members from 80 informal trade organisations that have joined together to form the Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economy Associations. The ZCIEA consists of informal economy associations from across the whole country, and has, up until now, been successful in negotiating with some municipalities on their members' behalf.

Mutemeri reported in an e-mail that "Zimbabwean municipal police have once again come on the throats of the poor vendors who are trying to eke a living from selling their wares, after serious harassment of ZCTU and accusing the labour centre of organising the informal economy. This is clear evidence that they are also pouring their venom on innocent vendors. The destruction is so bad. Some of the people had used their very last few dollars in order to sell some wares. This exercise by police has spread into other small towns as well. They are trying to send a message that everything which is associated to ZCTU must be destroyed to the roots. Government is trying to make it difficult for us to continue organising. But what they are doing is actually strengthening the association." ..."The Secretary General of ZCTU Mr W Chibebe and (myself) the coordinator of the informal economy project were in hiding because police are hunting us down."

A report by the ZCTU Informal Economy Desk on the Operation Restore Order / Murambatsvina that begun on the 18th of May states, "No one was prepared for the sudden, extensive and indiscriminate nature of the clean-up operation. At first, it was the informal traders and structures that were targeted. The exercise covered the whole country, including the rural areas. Almost a month after it started, the exercise moved into business premises, with warnings that private-owned and municipal flats, businesses operating in housing areas will be next in the firing line." Police spokesperson, Wayne Bvudzijena described the operation as the second largest single activity carried out by the police after independence (*The Herald*, 2 June 2005, page 7)."

Official justification by government was on the grounds that the informal economy was the "hiding place for criminals, people engaging in illegal activities and those who do not practise hygiene, thereby spoiling the image of the towns and country." The ZCTU Informal Economy Desk Report continues: "The attendant problems are multiple: homelessness, starvation, exposure to cold weather and diseases, loss of assets, wares and stocks, loss of income, wanton arrests, transport woes, rising rentals as a result of increased and urgent demand for accommodation, and abject poverty."

The ZCTU Informal Economy Desk Report describes the government's attempts to window-dress its clean-up operation. "As an afterthought, well into the operation, government indicated that it had drawn up an elaborate plan through the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises Development, to relocate Harare informal traders who were conducting business at 'illegal' places and council had identified a number of sites where they would operate from (*The Herald*, 2 June 2005, page 1)... These plans are part of an *ex poste* rationalisation exercise... . One would wonder why government did not plan ahead before the clampdown and why it did not move people into the alternative structures in a more orderly manner before hand. It does not make any sense to first traumatise people, and then call upon them to re-register for relocation (*The Herald*, 2 June 2005, pages 1 & 7)."

Apart from the official clean up excuse, other theories emerged to explain the exercise. Commentators have observed that the informal economy "is simply a reflection of the state of the economy, and hence a symptom of the problem and not the problem itself. If the exercise were targeting criminal elements, a more selective approach would have been appropriate."

In this case, even legally operating vendors and structures were affected. Quoted in the report, the Mayor of Bulawayo, Japhet Ndabeni Ncube, is on record saying that "We were generating a lot of revenue from the vendors. Bulawayo was the most organised city throughout the country in as far as vendors were concerned. We had put up shelters for them and they paid rent and licence fees to us. They were legal vendors operating within the confines of council by-laws," (*The Daily Mirror*, 25 June 2005, page 2). The ZCTU states: "If it is an exercise in the national interest, consultations should have preceded the operation. The Mayor of Bulawayo made it clear that no consultations were held."

The likely impact of 'Operation Restore Order' on the economy can be gauged by tracking the role and significance of the informal economy. The ZCTU report states that the majority of people in this 'sector' are at the very bottom of the economic and social ladder, working under precarious conditions.

The share of informal economy employment grew from less than 10% of the labour force in 1982 to close to 40% by 1998.

Formal sector employment in Zimbabwe now accounts for 16% of the labour force, the informal economy for at least 40% and the communal sector for at least 44%. In such a context, the informal economy has effectively become the economy.

It is currently estimated that no less than 80 per cent of households in Zimbabwe live below the poverty line now. The Poverty Assessment Study Survey (PASS) of the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare (1995) found that 61 per cent of households lived in poverty and 45 per cent in extreme poverty.

According to the Monetary Policy Statement of January 2005 (page 48), the SMEs, informal and micro-enterprises sector accounts for an estimated 15-20% of total output (Gross Domestic Product). Most local authorities derive substantial revenues from informal activities. For instance, Bulawayo City Council was receiving Z\$63 million a month (Z\$756 million a year) from vendors, which it now risks losing following the current clampdown on the informal economy (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 10 June 2005, page 4).

The ZCTU is currently assessing, in conjunction with ZCIEA, the impact of the clean-up operation. The report concludes: "Since government is dealing with the symptoms and not the real issues, the informal economy will rebound. However, it will take more time for the sector to regain its dynamism following the destruction of its asset base. It is easier to destroy than it is to reconstruct."

Update: Bulawayo Street Vendors take government to court and win

One of the ZCIEA affiliates, Bulawayo Upcoming Trader's Association (BUTA), has won the right to return to their stalls and places of trade following a high Court Case. BUTA sought a court order to declare the government demolition of the vendors' stalls illegal and are claiming compensation for the losses they have incurred. On August 2 the High Court ruled in BUTA's favour finding that street vendors' stalls had been destroyed indiscriminately and that many street vendors had permits to trade.

Robert Ndlovu, the lawyer representing BUTA, said that vendors had won the right to trade and were waiting for a certificate from the council. BUTA has 3 000 members, mostly fruit and vegetable vendors and market vendors at flea markets in Bulawayo.

Source: report from www.finance24.com

Street Vendors confront military police in Sao Paulo

Street vendors in Sao Paulo, Brazil, confronted the city's Metro Guarda Civil (MGC) - military police - in a running battle that lasted three and half hours on Friday 20th of May. The confrontation was triggered by confiscation of 300 street vendors' goods in the city centre by inspectors at around 19h00 hours.

The MGC, called in to reinforce police, used tear gas and stun grenades, eventually themselves calling for political leaders to defuse the situation. Four military police were reported injured and three street vendors were arrested in the battle. The MGC was called on to withdraw from the square because their presence there was a provocation to vendors.

Twenty-nine year-old vendor Sidnei, told media that the trouble was provoked by the inspectors' seizure of vendor's goods. "Friday team is the worst. They confiscate goods and do not give receipts so that they can be reclaimed. They say that the goods are 'falsificada' - assuming that they are fake brand names."

This was the second confrontation between street vendors and the city's police and military in May. On May 6th, six people were reported injured.

StreetNet affiliate SINTEIN- SP, the union of the informal workers of Sao Paulo, affiliated to the trade union centre CUT- is the only central union of workers with its headquarters in Sao Paulo where there is an exponential growth of the informal sector. Following the confrontation between street vendors and police and military, the focus of public attention has fallen on Brazil's informal economy workers and the need for legislation to provide economic justice and proper regulation instead of repression, arrest and assault.

Rapid growth of the informal economy is understandable because Sao Paulo is one the most industrialised cities in Latin America. It is also Sao Paulo, where after 12 twelve years of neo-liberal policies, coupled with the negative effects of globalisation, that economic recession has led to the unemployment of thousands of workers.

Unemployed workers have found themselves with no alternative but to seek work in the informal sector so as to be able to sustain their families.

Since 2002, after the electoral victory of PT – Workers’ Party in Brazil, investment in economic growth is beginning to show results. The economic growth has created three million new formal economy jobs, which although much welcomed, is far short of the number needed to solve joblessness and poverty. The informal economy can therefore not be ignored. A recent study has estimated that it contributes 6% of Brazil’s GDP. This is not an insignificant contribution as Brazil is ranked among the ten largest economies of the world.

The informal sector includes a very diverse group of economic activities. Micro and small businesses have been created for various economic activities, many being street and market vending which takes place in the city centre and in the peripheral region of the city. The informal economy is also home for professionals who are unable to find a place in the formal job market, such as teachers, information technology training, building companies, public phone operators, taxi drivers, accountants and many others. Legislation needs to be created for each segment of the informal economy. The sector’s contribution is likely to continue to grow in view of the difficulty of halting the harmful effects of economic globalisation.

In July, the president of the national trade union centre CUT, Mr. Luiz Marinho, was appointed as a Minister of Labour by the President of the Republic. He knows the problems and the difficulties of Brazil’s workers in the informal economy and can assist SINTEIN hopes he will ensure that just and inclusive legislation is passed. Such legislation should allow all the segments of the informal sector to undertake their commercial activities with dignity and respect. Furthermore, this legislation should also allow the participants to generate income that meets their daily needs and overcome poverty and so contribute to a fairer distribution of resources among all Brazil’s people and the growth of the nation. (Source: SINTEIN, Yara, Sampaio E Ricardo Moreno, and media reports)

STOP PRESS

In another attack in the Brás district of Sao Paulo on Monday 15th August, street vendors were again forced to close their businesses and to flee following a new confrontation with the city’s Metro Guarda Civil (MGC). Brazil CUT office is located in the district.

From best practice to Pariah: the case of Durban, South Africa

By Pat Horn, StreetNet International Co-ordinator

In 2001, the Metro Council of Durban adopted an impressive policy on the management of the Unicity's informal economy. Durban's Informal Economy Policy became feted by organisations such as the International Labour Organisation as an international best practice – because of its break with the traditional abolitionist policies of the past and its participatory developmental strategies to recognise, regularise, and provide developmental support for all informal workers in the Durban Metro. But in May 2005, fifty armed constables euphemistically named "peace officers", were deployed to put a stop to "illegal, unlicensed street trading" – ie all trading by vendors to whom the Council had not issued street trading permits. By then the Council had issued a total of 872 permits. Already in 1998, a survey done for the Durban Metro had shown that there were 19 000 street vendors in the whole Metro, approximately 7 000 working in the centre of Durban. The crackdown would therefore have the effect of putting over 18 000 vendors out of work. Most street vendors (the majority of whom are women supporting large families) do this work for lack of employment in the formal economy – it is one of the few non-criminal means available to them to eke out a livelihood, albeit only a basic subsistence. So – what happened ?

Durban's City Manager had proposed the adoption of the first stage of a Public Realm Management Plan (PRMP) to the Council in November 2004, in direct contradiction with Durban's Informal Economy Policy – authorising Council officials to bypass the Policy's carefully-crafted framework for sustainable methods of regulation and support of ALL the street vendors and informal traders who operate in the Durban Metro. The Council claimed "we want to break the cycle of survivalism, where people find themselves trapped in a secondary economy" – while evicting survivalist street vendors and denying them their livelihood. But no alternative means of livelihood were offered to the 6 000 street vendors in the city centre and the other 12 000 in the rest of the Durban Metro to whom permits had not been issued.

The Durban Metro's excuse for ditching the Informal Economy Policy is that they are preparing to create a "world-class city" in preparation for the FIFA World Cup in South Africa in 2010. However, international experience has shown that "quick-fix" street vendor evictions as envisaged by the PRMP can rarely be sustained for more than a few months – at best a couple of years – before the vendors are back, often in ever greater numbers. But even during these short times, the loss of incomes to the families and communities of street vendors has disastrous economic and social consequences.

Fighting back

StreetNet does not have any affiliated organisation in Durban since the enforced liquidation of the Self-Employed Women's Union (SEWU) in 2004. But the international office of StreetNet is located in Durban – and already in March 2005 we saw signs of the Council's intended crackdown in contravention of the provisions of

Durban's Informal Economy Policy. For the whole of March, StreetNet attempted in vain to engage Council officials in dialogue on the issues. We eventually had to institute an official complaint against a senior Council official who, instead of engaging in dialogue, attempted to intimidate StreetNet in a most unprofessional telephone call – but to date StreetNet has received no report from the Council about the outcome of this complaint, nor any apology or reassurance that there will be no repeat of such incidents.

A city-wide federation of street vendors' organisations lost credibility as its leaders compromised themselves and supported the artificial division created by the Council between those vendors to whom they had issued permits versus those without permits. As a result, street vendors have poured into StreetNet's offices for assistance. We further discovered that the Durban Council was unlawfully discriminating against refugees in their permit-allocation policy – unlike smaller neighbouring Councils who appeared to better understand the law.

StreetNet has therefore embarked upon a litigation offensive against the Durban Metro, accompanied by extensive media coverage. StreetNet assisted some of the evicted vendors to appeal to the Durban High Court for urgent relief through the Legal Resources Centre (LRC) a public interest law firm with a proud history of winning litigated precedents in the long fight against Apartheid and ongoing struggles for economic justice for the poor. StreetNet is also supporting a legal challenge through the LRC, by an informal traders' association from the outlying Phoenix area of Durban, against the arbitrary declaration by Council officials of all street trading in Phoenix as illegal. Further litigation – in defence of Durban's Informal economy Policy, and regarding the constitutionality of certain provisions of the Street Trade Bylaws – is planned.

Interim results

The Durban Metro panicked upon receiving the urgent High Court summons, and engaged TWO Senior Counsel to defend them. Fortunately, this resulted in inexperienced Council officials getting some long-overdue legal advice. Clearly they were soon advised of the illegality of their discrimination against refugees – because without any notice, the discriminatory practices were quietly but suddenly discontinued. This saved StreetNet the trouble of instituting the discrimination case we had been preparing.

Being aware that this would be a test case, the two judges who found this matter before them on different days, were reluctant to make an urgent ruling. The first deferred the matter to a different date, and the second heard the arguments – but reserved judgment. A large number of street vendors attended the hearing to offer their support to the two evicted vendors, but were surprised to hear lengthy arguments about the impoundment of cattle and legal rights to tow away vehicles causing obstruction !! This is largely due to a lack of case law on street vendors.

The University of Natal's School of Development Studies commissioned a quick study among formal businesses in Durban's Central Business District (CBD) – the constituency which the Durban Metro is seeking to impress by means of the PRMP. Interestingly, the research showed that businesses had mixed feelings about the crackdown – and they were particularly concerned about the lack of alternatives

available to evicted street vendors, and the lack of proper consultation with them prior to their eviction.

Conclusions from Report on Perspectives of Formal Businesses in the Durban CBD

The research for this study was carried out two weeks after the Peace Police began their operations under the PRMP. Some of the conclusion from the report are:

- Many of the formal businesses raise serious questions about the ethics, effectiveness and sustainability of the PRMP due to the current context of high unemployment and livelihood dependence on street trading; the failure of the municipality to provide alternative trading sites for those traders removed; and the lack of prior consultation with either the traders or the formal businesses themselves. By researching the perspectives of formal businesses in the Durban CBD this study has revealed three major reasons why the local government's claim to be acting in the interests of the formal business community through the PRMP is misleading and incorrect.
- Firstly, there is no unanimous position amongst the formal businesses on the issue of street traders; secondly, it appears the local government has made little attempt to consult the formal businesses in the area most affected by the street trader removals; and thirdly, many of the respondents when questioned did not support the approach taken under the PRMP. (Source: Conclusion Report by Anna Marriot, School of Development Studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa). July 24th, 2005.)

Urban alliances in Kenya form national alliance to represent street traders' interests (KENASVIT) **By Winnie Mitullah, Institute of Development Studies**

The Kenya National Alliance of Street Vendors and Informal Traders (KENASVIT) is a national organisation formed to represent street vendors' and informal traders' interests in Kenya. The alliance is an outcome of research that was conducted from 1998 – 2000 by the Institute for Development Studies (IDS), University of Nairobi, on Street Vending in Kenya. One of the main findings of this study was the revelation that street vendors lacked the capacity to organise themselves so as to have a strong voice on matters affecting them at local and national level.

The IDS organised a National Street Vendors' Conference in October 2003 in which participants from Kisumu, Mombasa, Nakuru, Eldoret, Machakos and Nairobi attended. During this meeting, the participants resolved to form a national alliance to represent their interests at national level. A National Interim Steering Committee was appointed by the delegates at this conference to spearhead the formation of the national alliance. The core responsibility of the steering committee was to draw up a constitution. Meanwhile, the seven urban centres represented at the conference were

asked to consolidate their membership in readiness for the formation of the national alliance.

The Institute for Development Studies, through funding from StreetNet, facilitated the process of building a national alliance. Three meetings were held to enable the national steering committee to draft the constitution for KENASVIT.

Constitution making process for KENASVIT

The first meeting was held at Merryland Hotel – Kisumu City in March 2004 to draft the constitution for KENASVIT. The basis of KENASVIT's constitution was the constitutions of the member urban alliances. The justification for basing the KENASVIT constitution on urban alliance constitutions was to harmonise the objectives of the urban alliance and the national alliance, and therefore enhance and strengthen the street vendors' voice in Kenya. At this meeting, the national steering committee, with support from IDS, through Dr WV Mitullah and Everlyne Wanyama, Henry Koweru from the Central Organisation of Trade Unions (COTU) and Lawrence Apiyo from Community Organisation Practitioners – Kenya (COPA) wrote the first draft of the KENASVIT Constitution.

The draft constitution was sent to the member urban alliances for sharing with their membership and for further input. The urban alliances held meetings with their membership to discuss the draft constitution. The next national steering committee meeting was held at Genevieve Hotel, Nakuru, in October 2004. The proposed amendments to the first draft of the KENASVIT constitution were discussed and plans were made for the national delegates' meeting at which the constitution was to be adopted and the national office bearers elected. This meeting was successful and it gave rise to the second draft of the KENASVIT constitution.

The Nakuru Draft was sent to the seven member urban alliances for further sharing and input from the wider membership, to nominate candidates for national office and to elect urban representatives. The National Delegates meeting was held at Manson Hotel in Mombasa on 18th march 2005. The main agenda of the meeting was to discuss further proposed amendments on the constitution and then adopt it. The delegates were expected to elect the national office bearers for the KENASVIT and chart the way forward for the national alliance.

During this meeting the delegates adopted the final constitution and national office bearers were elected. The following were elected to the National Executive Committee (NEC).

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1. Chairperson | Mr. Simon Sang'ale Ole Nasieku (Nakuru) |
| 2. Vice Chairperson | Mrs. Teresa Akong'o (Kisumu) |
| 3. Secretary | Mr. Peter Okello (Migori) |
| 4. Vice Secretary | Mr. Benard Maingi Isika (Machakos) |
| 5. Treasurer | Mrs. Viginia Wangui Mwangi (Mombasa) |

6. **Vice Treasurer** Mrs. Asha Saidi (Nairobi)
7. **Organising Secretary** Mr. Rueben Oraba (Kisumu City)
8. **Vice Organising secretary** Mrs. Rose Simon (Machakos)

Seven urban representatives from the following towns were elected: Kisumu City, Eldoret Town, Machakos Town, Nairobi City, Nakuru Town, Migori Town and Mombasa City.

What is KENASVIT?

KENASVIT is a national alliance of street vendors and informal traders in Kenya. It is a membership organisation which admits urban alliances (umbrellas) that consist of several associations which are working together to address issues affecting them in a given town. The national office for this alliance is located in the town of Nakuru where the chairperson, Mr. Simon Sang'ale Ole Nasieku, is based.

KENASVIT's vision is to transform street vending and informal businesses into corporate establishments. Its mission is to organise and empower street vendors and informal traders; to improve their business through training, and access to credit; to dialogue with local authorities and other relevant institutions on appropriate by-laws and policies that would give recognition to and bring to an end harassment and discrimination against traders.

The alliance has members in seven urban centres in Kenya, namely: Mombasa, Machakos, Migori, Nakuru, Kisumu, Eldoret and Nairobi. Membership to KENASVIT is open to street vendors' and informal traders' associations all over Kenya. To become members of KENASVIT, the street vendors' and informal traders' associations in a given town are expected to come together to form an Umbrella Association (which in the KENASVIT constitution is referred to as an urban alliance). It is through the urban alliance that traders become members of KENASVIT. Nationally, KENASVIT membership stands at 1,656 members who are found in over 60 smaller associations that form the urban alliances found in the seven towns.

After the election of national office bearers, the National Executive Committee was charged with responsibility of registering KENASVIT with the registrar of societies. Since KENASVIT is a national body, it urgently requires an operational office to be located in Nakuru to enable proper coordination of its activities.

The registration will be followed by the launching of the national alliance. The launch is expected to bring together street traders, policy makers, including urban governors and practitioners and academics. All the seven urban alliances, except Eldoret, have shown their commitment to the National Alliance by paying a registration of Ksh. 2,000 each. Part of this amount will be used for registering the alliance.

Street vendors in Nepal take refuge in NEST

By Umesh Upadhyaya, Deputy Secretary General, GEFONT Nepal

As a result of violence and conflict in Nepal, working people have been displaced from rural areas. Peasant families seeking work have moved to urban areas, but employment opportunities are declining even in the urban centres. An immediate option for the displaced families of workers in search of a livelihood is to work as street vendors, market vendors and hawkers in the capital city of Nepal and other urban centres. Nepal Street Vendors Union (NEST) is the only registered trade union of street workers and it is expanding its activities and coverage, this year affiliating to StreetNet. The protection of the right to trade and earn a living and the handling of disputes concerning the place of trading are the most important issues for street workers in Nepal. Institutional bargaining is with the municipalities and the Ministry of Local Development. The Ministry of Labour is also concerned with the policy issues affecting street and market traders and hawkers.

NEST's daily experience is of corrupt police and local administration. Trade union activists are being harassed. Street vendors are being pressed to leave the union otherwise their commodities will be confiscated, and also face political repression. This year after the February 1, 2005 seizure of power by the Royal Army under a Royal Proclamation, all organisational activities were restricted, and communications severely hampered and the media placed under the control of the monarchy. The king announced a new cabinet under his own chairmanship, violating the norms of multiparty democracy.

An initial phase of union organisation and influence-building ended as a result of the autocratic administration of the king. Municipal & government machinery has sought to harass union activists and to make it more difficult to organise in the labour market.

On March 8th the joint movement to demand the restoration of full democracy was begun. Intellectuals and constitutionalists called for the withdrawal of the Royal Proclamation which dissolved the democratically elected government in order to start a process for return to constitutional and representative rule of law. In the process, 226 leaders and cadres were arrested countrywide.

During the declared state of emergency (February 1 – April 30) every activity was restricted and prior permission for meetings and activities from the authorities was made compulsory. A joint delegation of the three national trade union centres – GEFONT, NTUC and DECONT, met with the Ministry of Labour to discuss the surveillance and arrests of trade unionists and to call for those held in custody to be released. The 'undeclared' suspension of workers' rights was condemned and it was demanded that the registration and renewal of trade unions be continued without hindrance. As a result of pressure and opposition built up by national trade union centres and the international community, the emergency regulations that prevented trade union and political meetings were lifted on the eve of the May Day celebration in Nepal. However, in practice, the suppression has continued.

Twelve "Pro-Palace" unions and one fake national centre have been registered by the state in violation of all constitutional and legal provisions. In order to impose these fake unions on the labour market, the government and its autocratic machinery is trying to suppress the genuine trade unions. Even registration and renewal of

genuine unions is being delayed and denied by the authorities. Although no fake union is yet registered by the pro-palace groups, increasing pressure is being experienced by NEST and street vendors. Municipalities are showing their reluctance to sit down and talk with NEST at the bargaining table. NEST, as an affiliate of GEFONT is working with the joint movement of national trade union centres and the democratic movement of the nation to overcome the political problems confronting the country. (Source: E-mail communication from NEST, February 23rd, March 8th, 27th March 2005).

Zambia: management of markets through cooperatives

By Kashiwa Lameck-General Secretary and Mike Chungu-National Coordinator Alliance For Zambia Informal Economy Associations (AZIEA)

Since the early 90s, the Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD) government has religiously implemented the structural adjustment programmes of the World Bank, embarking on a route that has involved the privatisation of public companies.

According to the Zambia Privatisation Agency, out of a portfolio of 289 companies, the agency has privatised 257 companies. This includes the copper mines that accounted for nearly 50 percent of the country's GDP and over 90 percent of its foreign earnings (Chomba and Lungu, 2005).

The privatisation programme has had terrible consequences that have left their toll on the labour market. With the overzealous implementation of the liberalisation programme, the country has witnessed an increase in casualisation of the labour force in the name of labour market flexibility and retaining international competitiveness (NRI, 2004).

Privatisation of markets

The severe decline in social spending by Government since the 1980s, has affected the maintenance of markets and the infrastructure of the markets are in a deplorable condition. Yet markets have become big 'industrial' sites and are occupied by a diverse informal working population that is reminiscent of the economic boom of the 1960s and early 1970s.

The Government's lack of capacity to award grants to local governments to improve the market infrastructure, is coupled with the failure by local authorities to provide quality services including water and sanitation, garbage collection and security. What has made matters worse is that the local authorities collect market levies on a daily basis and market traders contribute to the local government revenues.

Zambia National Marketeers Association (ZANAMA), the biggest affiliate of the Alliance for Zambia Informal Economy Associations (AZIEA) has been lobbying government to let the association manage markets. In pursuit of this objective, there have been several meetings including meeting the State President to argue the case that Local Authorities, irrespective of increasing and collecting market levies, have lamentably failed to provide the services such as garbage collection, water supply security, etc, and that the association would do much better at service provision.

AZIEA, being part of the wider and global social movement whose social orientation is for social democracy, as opposed to neo-liberalism, has not been in full support of outright privatisation of markets. This would entail using the modus operandi that the Government used in disposing of over 257 quasi-state firms.

AZIEA and ZANAMA believe that the socially acceptable mode of privatisation of markets would be to transform the market management into cooperatives.

There is however, need to get more information on co-operative management systems as may be prescribed by law, and look for best practice within and outside Zambia. To that effect, we proposed to commission a study to inform both AZIEA and ZANAMA.

Engagement with the process

As we were lobbying Government for market to be managed as cooperatives, the Republican President, Levy Patrick Mwanawasa, addressed the National Rally in Kitwe, and announced that the markets would be managed by market boards (*Times of Zambia*, April 17, 2005).

To that effect, the Ministry of Local Government and Housing has announced the completion of the formulation of the guidelines for the management of market boards, albeit without the participation of the key stakeholders including ZANAMA and AZIEA.

Government's position is at variance with ZANAMA's and indeed AZIEA's position, and AZIEA is now exploring engaging government in discussion and debate to shift the position from market boards to co-operatives, thus: AZIEA in partnership with Streetnet International has engaged the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to provide consultancy on the possibilities of managing markets as cooperatives.

The ILO cooperative coordinator for East, Central and Southern Africa, Mr Sam Philemon Mshiu, was in Zambia from July 18-27 2005 on a field visit to assess the current market management system and the associations' capacities. His report will inform a forthcoming stakeholders' workshop on suitable models of market management, including cooperatives, and best practices in market management – supported by StreetNet.

We are hoping that after this workshop both AZIEA and ZANAMA will have an in depth understanding and will engage Government in meaningful social dialogue on marketing cooperatives to ensure that they play an economic role underpinned by social justice.

Exchange visits: Korean and Indian street vendor organisations learn from each other

By Kim Kyoung-lim, Propaganda Director Korean Street Vendors' Confederation (KOSC)

A nine-member delegation from the Korean Street Vendors' Confederation (KOSC) visited with the National Alliance of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) and the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India from 29 April to 3 May as part of a six-day exchange visit between StreetNet affiliates. Three of the delegates were from the KOSC head-office and the other 6 were members of KOSC branches.

The exchange visit provided an opportunity for KOSC and NASVI members to learn about the situation and the activities of street vendors' organisations in each other's countries. As part of the preparation for the exchange, the KOSC team held three meetings to discuss the purpose of the visit for KOSC and NASVI as StreetNet affiliates, and to plan the activities.

During the visit in India, KOSC spent time with the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in Ahmedabad where we learnt about cooperative organisation, and SEWA's various struggles to defend the rights of its members. We felt that the Indian Government was similar to the Korean Government in its negative attitude to street vending. However, SEWA's activities were different to that of KOSC. Most of KOSC's activities are directed to field struggles and protests against the repressive, unilateral crackdowns by the gangsters employed by municipalities. SEWA's work for its members is much wider and covers, licenses, water/sanitary facilities, taking their protests through the courts to defend their member's against eviction and exploitation, members' leadership training and a bargaining system with a wide range of stakeholders. SEWA and NASVI are always looking at ways to introduce new means to assist and work for their members. We learnt that there are many lawyers, judges and government officials considering the human rights of informal workers, including the rights of street and market vendors and hawkers.

Following the KOSC exchange visit, delegates wrote a report on the work of SEWA and NASVI, and we have circulated it to the leaders and branches of KOSC so all members can benefit from what we have learnt during the visit about street vendor organisation in India.

Some of the problems we had during the visit, that we can learn from and avoid next time, were that we had only one interpreter, who had to translate Korean, Hindi and English at the same time. His efforts couldn't cover all the KOSC team's communication with members of SEWA and NASVI. Other difficulties such as food, culture and climate, we were able to overcome. There were also some misunderstandings. Both NASVI and KOSC, understood the budget differently, especially about who will pay for accommodation, meals, and translation and with what funds. It would have been better to begin with a mutual agreement on the budget and how the allocations would be made. Through discussion between NASVI and KOSC we were able to reconcile the budgets for the field visits.

The exchange visits between NASVI and KOSC were the first to be put to the test by StreetNet affiliates outside Southern Africa. KOSC found the visit a very useful learning experience and means of building solidarity and understanding between our organisations working in different situations in Asia.