



StreetNet News No. 10 September 2007

StreetNet News is the 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: www.streetnet.org.za

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Second International Congress of StreetNet International in Brazil

By Pat Horn, StreetNet International Co-ordinator

The Second StreetNet International Congress was held in Brazil Atibaia, Brazil, on 21st and 22nd August, 2007. After the First International Congress had been held in Seoul, Korea and the StreetNet International launch had been held in Durban, South Africa, it had been agreed that this Congress should be held in Latin America. We had many challenges, such as a very limited budget after not succeeding in raising the amount of funds that we wanted to raise. But ultimately the Congress was successfully completed. This would not have been possible without the

solidarity and invaluable assistance of CUT Sao Paulo and other departments of CUT Brazil, our hosts in Brazil.

The Congress was followed by a Policy Dialogue on the 23 August 2007, hosted by CUT at their auditorium in Bras, Sao Paulo.

OPENING SESSION

The Opening session of the StreetNet International Congress was hosted by CUT Brazil. The opening event was a performance and puppet production by a waste collector from Forum Centro Vivo in Sao Paulo, about the way in which waste collectors (catadores) of Brazil have organised themselves. Delegates were welcomed by representatives of the Mayor of Atibaia, ORIT-CSI and CUT Brazil.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Three constitutional amendments were adopted by a two-thirds majority as required:

1. A minimum membership size of 500 members is now specified in the constitution for affiliates which can be accepted by StreetNet in future;
2. It is now a constitutional requirement that elected leaders in StreetNet have to be street vendors, informal market vendors or hawkers, or organisers of street vendors, informal market vendors or hawkers;
3. Technical amendments required for StreetNet's registration as a Non-Profit Organisation in South Africa.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolutions were adopted by the Congress on the following:

1. Informal economy workers
2. StreetNet and Fight Against Poverty
3. HIV-AIDS in the informal economy
4. Worker Education in the informal economy
5. Exchange visit criteria
6. Creation of regional structures in StreetNet

Due to lack of time to complete the discussion, the following proposed resolutions were referred to the International Council:

1. Fund-Raising Sub-Committee

2. Privatisation of Markets

ELECTIONS

The elections were conducted by the following two Electoral Officers in accordance with the agreed Elections Procedure:

- Flavio de Souza Gomes (CUT Sao Paulo)
- Jose del Valle (CROC Mexico) assisted by Joon Moon (Korean interpreter) and other members of CUT.

The results of the elections were as follows:

PRESIDENT: Kim Heung-Hyun from KOSC, Korea

VICE-PRESIDENT: Clarisse Gnahoui from USYNVEPID, Benin

SECRETARY: Elvis Nkandu Chishala from AZIEA, Zambia

TREASURER: Teresa Ak'ongo from KENASVIT, Kenya

ADDITIONAL MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL:

1. Luz Ysabel Maldonado Velasquez from FEDEVAL, Peru
2. Fatou Binetou Yafa from CNTS, Senegal
3. Madeleine Tounkara from CNTG, Guinee
4. Sandra Yadira Florez Jimenez from CTCP, Nicaragua
5. Shikha Joshi from NASVI/SEWA, India
6. Juliana Afari-Brown from Ghana StreetNet Alliance
7. Lameck Kashiwa from AZIEA, Zambia
8. Fundile Jalile from East Cape Street Vendors'Alliance, South Africa
9. Ram Baji Rao Sharmale from NASVI, India
10. Manuel Sulca Escalante from FEDEVAL, Peru
11. Peter Odhiambo Okello from KENASVIT, Kenya

CUT hosts Brazilian Policy Dialogue on Informal Work

A policy dialogue titled "Regulation of informal work: street traders and waste collectors (catadores) was hosted by CUT-SP on 23rd of August in Bras, Sao Paulo and attended by

street vendors of Sao Paulo, members of CUT affiliates and delegates to the StreetNet Congress.

The National President of CUT Arturo Henrique da Silva Santos welcomed the delegates of street trader organisations from more than 25 countries and said they had a commitment to cooperate and learn from StreetNet's experience.

Growing pressure to address informal work

International Secretary Joao Felicio said that hosting the 2nd International Congress of StreetNet had been important for CUT as their last congress had noted the growing importance of the representation and struggle of the informal workers and the challenge that this poses.

Growing pressure exists to make effective interventions to address the situation where 45 million people work in Brazil alone and more broadly in Latin America as a whole where the informal sector is fast expanding. He continued, "we know that women are the poorest, have no social rights and that their access to public power is denied and they face exclusion."

Military used to repress workers

Da Silva Santos said that in Latin America there are now democratic governments who are receptive to dialogue and there has never been a better chance to advance the organisation and address the needs of vulnerable workers. The informal economy workers were often brutally repressed with military force and lack the means to negotiate their rights, therefore a strong strategy is called for to advance their demands for recognition.

Pat Horn, Co-ordinator of StreetNet said that this was the fourth Policy Dialogue on street vending but the first held in Latin America. The previous policy dialogues had been held in Patna (India) 2002, in Accra (Ghana) in 2002 and in Johannesburg (South Africa) in 2003.

Antonio Carlos Spis, ADH CUT, chairing the Policy Dialogue, welcomed the first presenter Clarisse Gnahoui from USYNVEPID, Benin. Gnahoui related how as a market vendor she had tried to personally resolve problems in the market where she worked, and after failing had formed the union which now has close to 2000 members. The problems

negotiated are tariffs and tax increases, the allocation of trading spaces; storage space and micro-finance for buying stock. She said an obstacle to their first attempt to negotiate with the government was that there is no policy on market and street trading and only after many attempts did government agree to discuss problems face to face with the union.

Lack of consultation with market traders

One of the structures they have formed is a committee that negotiates on day-to-day issues with the market management committee to whom they pay their levies. She said that a dispute that arose was over the introduction of security without consultation with the market traders. Their protest on the decision led to a debate in the media on the workplace rights that the union was defending. As a result of the organised protest the security project was scrapped. She said that informal workers are the majority in Benin and with formal workers are making a significant contribution to the economy and there is a need to see national policies do not perpetuate economic injustices against workers. StreetNet had built her confidence to negotiate through its work of training and organisation.

Forced eviction of the poor

Beto Custodio, a Sao Paulo city councillor representing the PT (Workers' Party) discussed the new local government bill on street vending that had been presented the day before to the city and called on the street vendors of Sao Paulo to make submissions and comments on it. He said it was typical in all Brazilian cities for "cleaning" to mean the forced eviction of the poor from the streets. Street vendors have been the target of military force. Custodio said the new bill makes provision for a negotiating structure involving different unions and civil society (see below). He said that informal workers need to organise sectorally and demand a just law and respect for decent working conditions. He said his party the PT was protesting against the harassment of street vendors who are put in prison for earning a living. Their voice must be heard for the adoption of the new law which could alleviate many of the problems experienced now in governance of public space as the work space of the poor. In response to a question from the floor he said that street vendors organisations and civil society had participated in the drafting of the Bill.

Public sector workers

Monica Valente, Public Services International (PSI) spokesperson for Latin America said the PSI is planning a partnership with StreetNet on opposing policies on neo-liberalism and privatisation which would be discussed at their congress in September. Further, they would work for the protection of informal workers rights, particularly women who represent 60% and for all workers' access to health.

The third speaker Arbind Singh, NASVI, India, talked about the work of his organisation at the macro and micro-levels in harmonising the implementation of a new national policy on street vendors in India where 23% of the population in the town and cities are street vendors. He said that regulations had to be implemented at village/town (municipal) and state levels in adherence with the new policy. This entails the introduction of street vending committees, the demarcation of new trading spaces and the issue of identity cards and permits to street vendors. The process was uneven and while in some states 100 000s of ID cards have been issued, in other cases NASVI has pursued litigation as a means to ensure that the national policy is implemented.

An important new provision is that of the municipal corporation which is the sole legal authority to issue permits and collect money which has cut out corrupt practices of extortion that was a problem in the past. He said NASVI's role over the last decade was to lobby political parties for new policy, taking part in the drafting of new laws and afterwards pushing for the full implementation. He said one of the biggest steps forward ever made in improving the living conditions of the working poor in India had been achieved following much hard work by NASVI and SEWA in pushing for the approval of social welfare and pensions by the government for unorganised workers who represent 92% of the workforce (370 million workers). The decision was announced during India's 60th year of Independence celebrations.

Extreme inequalities

After lunch the Minister of Welfare, Luiz Marinho, addressed the Policy Dialogue presenting a perspective from government. He said that under President Lula, Brazil has a democratic government from the left that has a responsibility to reduce poverty and reduce the extreme inequalities between the rich and the poor. Informal economy workers

were seen as a second sector and he believed the challenge was to reduce the size of the sector and to formalise work. Marinho said that the government had raised minimum wage levels, gave aid to those who face destitution (Family Aid Plan) and a new pension plan was introduced which subsidised the elderly poor.

He said the Government Development Solidarity Agency works with informal economy organisations and had the potential to create social and economic values that build socialism and the development of new economic opportunities for the poor. The Solidarity Agency had assisted the wastepickers build a national cooperative movement and this was seen as an advance by the poor in creating opportunities and social values in work.

The Policy Dialogue concluded with a presentation by the Carlos Enrique e Eduardo of the Movimento Nacional dos Catadores de Material Reciclável (MNCR) and Antonieta Vieira, a sociologist from the University of Sao Paulo.

Struggle for recognition of work leads to national cooperative movement

The MNCR is national co-operative movement which started in 2001 with 17 000 people in 17 states, and five years later has 30 000 members. In 2003, wastecollection was recognised as an occupation and regulation was introduced at the federal, state and municipal levels. The most important elements for MNCR's development were first, the struggle for the social function of waste collectors - they are now seen as workers and environmental agents who clean the city and economise power. He/she is a citizen who deserves protection and support of government and society. The second step was grassroots organisation into associations and co-operatives to work as waste collectors. Third, they also needed training, and fourth, representation on local government in making public policy, and partnerships in civil society. As part of creating a solidarity economy, the movement has obtained the credit needed to build the infrastructure for its work and products, and health and safety regulations have been negotiated.

Sao Paulo street vendors review new bill

By Luciana Itikawa

City Councillor Beto Custodio of the PT speaking at the Policy Dialogue hosted by CUT SP called for street vendors to make public submissions on the on the new bill 1017/1997.

The bill was drafted in 1997 by Jose Eduardo Cardozo, former city councilor, after two commissions in 1991 and 1995 investigated violence, corruption and patronage in the Sao Paulo street vending sector. The commissions opened up public discussion with street vendors' associations that fed into the bill. The Bill sat gathering dust for 10 years.

The bill brings important innovations and includes several features that relate to a law passed in 1991(11.039/1991) that set up street vending bargaining forums, ie: a negotiation channel between the State and vendors' representatives. Since 1991, the law has been slightly modified by mayors but the main principles and rules haven't been changed. In terms of the law decentralised bargaining forums were introduced as a means by the state to bring government closer to citizens.

The forums called Permanent Street Vendors' Commission (Comissao Permanente de Ambulantes), in theory, are held monthly in each municipal district (subprefeitura). These commissions, should have two to five street vendors' representatives; three to six; civil society and popular associations' representatives; two and five State representatives, including police, public attorneys and city executive administration officials. Decentralisation means that each municipal district is in charge of implementation of its own street vending policy rules on trading places, merchandise and trading licenses. The executive administration is responsible for co-ordination of street vending rules.

In reality, the Commissions do not guarantee representation of all associations, as non-licensed vendors' associations are often not included. In the downtown area, for example, license-holder vendors represent only 10% of the entire number of existing street vendors. Commissions also are vulnerable to local political manipulation, such as from civil society and Police representatives, who oppose increased

street vending. Unbalanced representation has turned the Commissions into illegitimate bargaining forums.

The new bill 1017/1997 allows for the creation of a Street Vending Municipal Council, falling under the Executive administration, which would be in charge of local Commissions' decision-making processes and for setting up urban planning and police control standards for the street vending occupation. Street Vending Municipal Councils would have guaranteed representation with democratically elected members (vendors, society and state). A formal structure for dealing with complaints by street vendors is made provision for. Any ordinary street vendor could bring a formal objection against arbitrary police or official procedure, without fear of intimidation or bias.

MEMORANDUM on the violent approach of the Sao Paulo Municipality

Workers of the informal economy, the 2nd Streetnet International Congress - held on the 21st and 22nd August 2007 in Atibaia SP - and the Policy Dialogue on the Regulation of Informal Work held on the 23rd August 2007 in Sao Paulo Brazil, through their representative entities as listed below and signed, together with CUT (Central Unica dos Trabalhadores) express total repugnance against the violent approach of the Sao Paulo municipality, using the Guarda Civil Metropolitana (Civil Metropolitan Guards) and the Sao Paulo State through military police, to oppress the informal economy workers and specifically street vendors.

We also protest vehemently against the intolerance, the lack of dialogue and public policies by the municipality and State for those affected workers. We emphasise the necessity and willingness, through our organisations, to collaborate in open dialogues and negotiations to find a solution to the problems that affect this sector of the economy, using public power at municipal, state and federal levels to find a resolution. Furthermore we demand, the immediate return of trading licenses, as well as the issue of Terms of Permission of Use (TOUs) for all street vendors of the Sao Paulo municipality.

Signed by: ASSOTSI - Moçambique; AZIEA, Zambia; CNTG, Guinea; CNTS, Senegal; CTCP-FNT, Nicaragua; ECASV, South Africa; FNOTNA, México; GSTA, Ghana; FEDEVAL, Peru; KOSC, Korea; KASVIT, Kenya; KENASVIT, Kenya; KHTEMA, Lesotho; LDFC, Congo; MUFIS, Malawi; NUIEVO, Uganda; ZCIEA, Zimbabwe; NASVI, India; SEWA, India; NEST, Nepal;

SEU, Bangladesh; SINTEIN, Brasil; SUDEMS, Senegal; SYNAVAMAB, Benin; USYNVEPID, Benin; CROC, México; CUT, Brasil.

2nd Congress - Resolutions

Resolution 1: Informal economy workers

From 26th to 30th March 2007, a workshop on collective bargaining in the Informal Economy, strategies and litigations for Street vendors was held in Saly, organised by StreetNet International, whose affiliates were represented by informal economy workers.

Those informal economy workers:

- Considering their non-recognition in a legal and regulatory framework;
- Considering the fact that the Labour Codes used in most countries do not consider their concerns;
- Considering the lack of representation in the decision-making structures;
- Conscious of their vulnerability and their social exclusion;
- Measuring all humiliations and harassment from policemen, municipal authorities and fiscal services;
- Considering their dynamism, their innovation capacity, their creative spirit and their business sense;
- Conscious of the economic weight of their sector in the national economy and their strategies of poverty reduction, street vendors affiliated to StreetNet:
- Demand a better organisation and structuring that are in line with their developmental aspirations, from StreetNet affiliates.
- Call with all their energy for a system of social protection for all their workers.
- Demand to Administrative and Municipal authorities, the creation of a legal framework for street vendors.
- Invite those in power (the government) to establish the social dialogue as a mean to solve all litigations that occurred concerning street vending.
- Demand to Governments the recognition of a status of street vendors.
- Invite all street vendors wherever they are to unite around StreetNet in order to exchange the positive experiences and successes.

- Demand to national States and decentralized local authorities to propose the reform of labour, hygiene, security, civil and trading obligations codes, in order to adapt them to the reality of the Informal Economy.

PROPOSED: CNTS, Senegal

SECONDED: NUIEWO, Uganda

Resolution 2: StreetNet and Fight Against Poverty

This Second International Congress of StreetNet:

NOTING

- The need to enable StreetNet to become a big and powerful organisation in the fight against poverty;
- To seek StreetNet partnership with big International Institutions (E.U, U.N, global union federations GUFs) and international Human Rights NGOs, etc.) involved in the fight against poverty;
- To involve affiliated organisations in the planning of StreetNet activities;
- The International Coordinator and Council to establish a calendar of visits to affiliated organisations to listen to their members;
- To organise exchange workshops on practical experiences;
- To organise trainings of organisations affiliated to StreetNet International on Informal Economy;
- To supply affiliated organisations with the documentation on Informal Economy.

PROPOSED: LDFC, Democratic Republic of Congo

SECONDED: KENASVIT, Kenya.

Resolution 3: HIV-AIDS in the informal economy

This Second International Congress of StreetNet:

NOTING

1. That many street vendors are affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, either because they have lost their employment

through being HIV- positive or suffering from AIDS, or because they have to support more and more dependants as they lose breadwinners in their extended families;

2. Uganda is one of the countries in Africa that has initiated the Market Vendors Aids Project (MAVAP) which has done a good job. This could be referred to as a role model for other affiliated organisations that may wish to establish such initiatives.

HEREBY RESOLVES that all affiliated organisations should establish HIV/AIDS committees at their members' places of work, focus objectively on sensitisation programmes, voluntary counselling and testing procedures for workers to know their HIV status, treatment of infected clients by providing them with ARVs (anti-retroviral treatment) and other necessities - including prevention.

StreetNet International and all StreetNet affiliates should make possible contacts with other International Organisations to solicit funds for affiliates to run HIV/AIDS programmes. StreetNet should also establish an international Sub-Committee on HIV/AIDS in accordance with Clause 10.6(d) of the StreetNet Constitution.

Exchange of visits and sharing of experiences is of paramount importance and must be encouraged. Partnerships need to be established with health institutions and health professionals (both medical and psychological) for maximum effectiveness.

PROPOSED: NUIEWO, Uganda

SECONDED: USYNVEPID, Benin

Resolution 4: Worker Education in the informal economy

This Second International Congress of StreetNet:

NOTING

1. StreetNet's affiliation to the International Federation of Workers Education Associations (IFWEA);
2. StreetNet's role in monitoring and evaluation of the IFWEA Southern and East Africa project on organizing workers in the informal economy;

3. StreetNet's history of collaboration at country and regional level with IFWEA affiliates WEAZ (Zambia), PLADES (Peru), Workers' College and Ditsela (South Africa) and relationships with LARRI (Namibia), SEWA Academy (India), LEARN (Philippines), LRS and Khanya College (South Africa);
4. The need for more capacity in workers' education organizations to be able to take on facilitation of informal economy workers' education activities for StreetNet's affiliates.

HEREBY RESOLVES

1. To participate in the Worker Educators' Forum for workers education in the informal economy which will be convened at the international conference of IFWEA in Ahmedabad, India, in December 2007, to contribute and gain some experience about perspectives on workers' education in the informal economy.
2. To develop a 3-year Workers' Education programme spanning 2008 to 2010.
3. To continue to develop informal economy worker education materials and make these available for wider use by informal economy workers' organizations, in collaboration with IFWEA affiliates.
4. To identify and develop worker educators from among the affiliates of StreetNet International.

PROPOSED: FEDEVAL, Peru

SECONDED: CTCP-FNT, Nicaragua

Resolution 5: Exchange visit criteria

This Second International Congress of StreetNet:

NOTING

1. That StreetNet International has an extensive programme of exchange visits between affiliates, started during the first three-year plan from 2003 - 2005 but ongoing during the current three-year period from 2006 - 2008;
2. That StreetNet is involved in an additional programme of exchange visits in our joint UNI-StreetNet programme in francophone West Africa;
3. That we have experienced two instances of abuse of exchange visit funds.

HEREBY RESOLVES to adopt the following criteria, in addition to (and to strengthen) the existing administrative requirements and procedures, in relation to all exchange visits supported by StreetNet:

(a) The purpose of exchange visits is to learn more about the following from each others' experiences: - organising strategies appropriate to workers in the informal economy, particularly market vendors, street vendors and hawkers;

- how collective bargaining is done (what are the issues, which authorities are the negotiation partner, how does the organisation structure its own negotiating teams, how do the negotiating teams report back, etc.);
- what gains have been made for the members, and how far can such gains be replicated;
- how do the organisations build, administer and sustain themselves;
- how do the organisations build their leadership (particularly women leadership) and develop their capacity;
- comparison of organisational systems and structures, and how well they work;
- what common experiences they have which they would like to share with other organisations of market vendors, street vendors and/or hawkers.

(b) StreetNet funds allocated to exchange visits are to be used exclusively for the realisation of the above mentioned objectives.

(c) Organisations participating in exchange visits are expected to make a contribution (however small) to the costs - and such contribution should be clearly indicated in the financial reports.

(d) None of StreetNet's funds allocated to exchange visits may be used by participants for personal spending money. Participants who wish to make purchases in the country they are visiting have to organise their own private funds for this purpose.

PROPOSED: AZIEA, Zambia

SECONDED: KENASVIT, Kenya

Resolution 6: Creation of regional structures in StreetNet

This Second International Congress of StreetNet:

NOTING

1. That StreetNet affiliates in certain regions have established some level of direct co-operation with each other in various ways;
2. The proposals for establishing an Asian regional structure developed by affiliates attending Street-Net's Asian Regional Workshop in Nepal in November 2006;
3. The constitutional provisions already in place for regional finances (Clause 11.2).

HEREBY RESOLVES

1. That StreetNet International should establish regional structures in a bottom-up manner based on the co-operation between affiliates in the region, as follows:
 - one focal point organisation will be identified by the International Congress or the International Council in each identified region, who will house the regional structure of StreetNet and co-ordinate the communication between affiliates in the region;
 - the focal point organisation will report to the International Council, and to the Executive Committee and the StreetNet office between International Council meetings;
 - the focal point organisation will be bound by the provisions of Clause 11.2 of the StreetNet International constitution with respect to fundraising and financial management;
2. It will be the responsibility of affiliates in each region to organise and strengthen StreetNet in their region.
3. That the following regional structures should be established at this International Congress, with the possibility of being revised, sub-divided or added to at future International Congresses according to StreetNet's

expansion: - Asia; - West Africa; - East and Southern Africa; - Latin America.

4. That the StreetNet office should negotiate with the identified focal point organisations about their willingness to house StreetNet's regional structures, and endeavour to raise funds to cover the administration costs incurred by focal point organisations.

PROPOSED: KENASVIT, Kenya

SECONDED: CTCF-FNT, Nicaragua