



StreetNet News

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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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Post-election violence in Kenya disrupts lives of street vendors and informal traders

By Evalyne Wanyama, KENASVIT National Co-ordinator

On 27th December 2007, Kenyans went to the ballot box to elect the tenth parliament against a background of various election pledges made by the various candidates to improve their lives. However, the events that followed regarding the presidential vote tallying and eventual announcement of the winner, plunged the country into violence and chaos that has severely affected members of the Kenya National Alliance of Street Vendors and Informal Traders (KENASVIT) and Kenyans in general. This report focuses on the impact of the violence on members of KENASVIT located in Eldoret, Nakuru, Mombasa, Nairobi, Kisumu and Migori towns. Machakos alliance was least affected by the violence. The spontaneous outbreak of violence left a trail of destruction in the form of displacement from homes, displacement from trading sites, suspicion, injuries and loss of lives, loss of property, reduced incomes and stagnation of Associations' activities as detailed below.

During the skirmishes, several street vendors were injured and others lost their lives and their loved ones. Others fled from their homes to seek refuge in churches, schools and police camps as their houses were vandalised and/or set ablaze by the attackers. The brutality, coupled with desperation and homelessness, has caused immeasurable trauma to the affected traders. Some displaced members migrated to other towns or their ancestral homes and only time will tell whether they will come back to their places of work. Those living in the displaced people's camps have to contend with inadequate supplies of food, water, sanitation, clothing, shelter, medical care and education for their children. Some displaced traders are carrying on with their business on the streets while living in the camps.

During the protests, many street vendors lost their business items to looters and/or arsonists given that they operate from the streets, which are usually the combat zones. Household items and business property worth millions of shillings have been lost by KENASVIT members during this crisis. The prices of basic commodities have gone up, thus making life very difficult for the displaced and poor people in Kenya. Working hours have reduced as traders open late and close early for security reasons. In some towns like Nakuru which is under curfew, the hawkers who used to sell to night travellers are forced to work during the day only. Low business and the volatile nature of life in the affected towns has left street vendors who had loans unable to service them. Payment of municipal council rates has been equally affected. However, business is slowly going back to normal. Suspicion among traders is still high as some traders evict their colleagues from their trading sites. KENASVIT leaders are trying to intervene but it's clear that a concerted effort is needed to address this problem.

Association life for KENASVIT members came to a halt as members struggled to save their lives and possessions. The communication hitches made it difficult to reach out to members and the government also outlawed all public gatherings except religious ones. However, the ban is now lifted and peace, reconciliation and work-related meetings are allowed. It is within this premise that KENASVIT National Office has

asked all affiliates to call meetings with the grass root members to assess the impact of the crisis on each member and chart a way forward.

Post-election violence dealt a major blow to the national fabric, and restoration of peace is a matter of priority for all Kenyans. KENASVIT has joined other state and non-state actors in this effort. KENASVIT members fully support the mediation effort led by the former UN Secretary Koffi Annan, to find a peaceful resolution to the political crisis. KENASVIT supports key resolutions from the mediation team such as the review of the constitution and the enactment of the national land policy as a means of redressing historical injustices and preventing recurrence of such problems in future.

To bring members back together, KENASVIT National Office is planning to undertake a peace and reconciliation programme at all levels of the organisation. It also seeks collaboration with other stake-holders to provide counselling services to the traumatised members to enable them move on with their lives. Community policing programmes shall be under taken in collaboration with relevant authorities to rid the streets of criminal elements so that street vendors can work well. To carry out these activities KENASVIT needs support from partners and friends.

To conclude, KENASVIT members are appealing to all comrades in StreetNet to show their solidarity by sending solidarity messages to Kenyan leaders to keep peace and resolve the conflict as soon as possible so that street vendors can work in peace.

StreetNet work plan for 2008

2008 is the final year of StreetNet's second three-year plan (2006 - 2008). StreetNet's evaluation for 2007 noted the need to highlight the overall objectives for which project funds are based:

- Reduced marginalisation of street vendors through diminished harassment, better levels income and security, improved health situation, decreased poverty, lower levels of child labour, less impact of HIV/AIDS;
- Rights of street vendors to be secured;
- Effective statutory representational systems;
- Proper policies to be implemented;
- Enhanced organisational capacity;
- Less vulnerability to patronage and corruption;
- Reduced fragmentation of informal economy organisations;
- Education and training for informal workers in the street vending sector.

1. Workshops: A leadership training programme for our affiliate, FEDEVAL, Peru (initiated in 2005) will take place in the first six months of 2008. Joint StreetNet - Southern African Trade Union Co-ordinating Committee (SATUCC) informal economy organisation workshop is scheduled to take place in August 2008.

2. Exchange visits: The following visits were started in 2007 and the second leg of the visits are to be completed in 2008: CNTS (Senegal) - SEWA (India). FNOTNA (Mexico) - CTCP (Nicaragua) ZCIEA (Zimbabwe) - Eastern Cape Street Vendor Alliance NEST(Nepal) - KENASVIT (Kenya) Planning for 2008 visits: There is provision for exchange visits in 2008, and it is proposed to prioritise the following organisations: SIVARA (Argentina); FOSSIEH (Honduras); LDFC (Democratic Republic of Congo); Street Vendors' Project (New York); SEU (Bangladesh); and FUTRAND (Venezuela).

A final decision is to be made by the International Council in April on the 2008 exchange visits.

3. International meetings: The Urban Planning and Policy Development Conference in Delhi, India will be held in April 2008 back to back with the International Council meeting. NASVI and SEWA will be host organisations for the Conference. The Conference aims agreed on at the International Council meeting in May 2007 are:

- Develop capacity to make input to planning and policy development;
- Move towards participatory urban planning involving street vendors;
- Move towards involvement of stakeholders in policy formulation;
- Ultimately, how do we change the minds of judges, lawyers, urban planners etc.
- Identify best practices.

4. Global Union Federations:

StreetNet-UNI: The StreetNet-UNI informal economy capacity building organisation programme in Francophone Africa (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Guinee, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo) that has been running since 2005 ends in the second half of 2008.

StreetNet-PSI: StreetNet and the global union federation Public Services International (PSI) will continue to network informally in building links between formal and informal sector trade unions in Brazil, Colombia, South Africa and Zambia.

5. Litigation: Litigation on the case of the street vendors' organisation Phoenix Plaza Street Traders Association (PPSTA) was filed in the Durban High Court in 2007 by the Legal Resources Centre, contesting the legality of impounding street vendors' goods by Ethekwini Metropolitan Council. We are still waiting for a date for the case to be heard. A class action against the abuse of power by the Metro Police is also in the pipeline.

6. Newsletter: Three issues of the newsletter are scheduled to be printed this year, in March, July, November, instead of two, in response to the request by affiliates for its greater frequency. The third issue was made possible by the office economising on the newsletter budget during 2006 and 2007.

7. Website: StreetNet will continue to work on updating the website with news and events and also work for greater interaction with affiliates to keep it a street vendors' window to the world, that provides information on informal economy organisation, StreetNet's activities and our affiliates. This year's web themes to highlight the struggles of street vendors and informal economy workers are:

International Women's Day (March 8, 2008)

International Labour Day (May 1, 2008)

No Child Labour Day (June 12, 2008)

Profiling the activities of StreetNet affiliates (July -December, 2008).

This theme will need the full co-operation of all affiliates by sending in information, stories and photographs.

8. Campaigns: World Class Cities FOR ALL!! StreetNet will continue to co-ordinate the South Africa campaign in the build up to 2010 FIFA World Cup games in 2008, including:

- Negotiations with municipalities and Rail Reserve Parastatals;
- Negotiations between NEDLAC and the FIFA LOC;
- Strengthening of alliances with campaign partners.

9. Worker Education: A three-year joint programme of workers education for workers in the informal economy in the SADC (Southern African Development Community) region will be worked out jointly with DITSELA, following on the joint Train-the-Trainer workshop held in Johannesburg in July 2007.

10. Regional structures: The plans for four regional structures in Asia, Latin America, Southern & East Africa, and West Africa, will be discussed at the International Council meeting in April 2008. This follows the resolution taken at the second International Congress in 2007, that based on co-operation between affiliates in the region: "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."

Next three years to the Third StreetNet International Congress in 2010

We have found that it is possible to achieve a lot with our very limited budget, and it is likely that we will have to continue to squeeze as much as possible out of very limited budgets. We have to look for new donors for the next Three-year Plan from 2009 - 2010, as only the FNV has indicated its willingness to continue to fund our core and project activities during that time. Ford Foundation will continue to support our participation in global civil society events, however.

We anticipate that our affiliates will continue to increase in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and in the absence of funds for field visits, we are discussing with the Global Labour Institute in Geneva, how to start extending into eastern Europe. We will need to intensify our Latin American and Caribbean activities through the ILO and our contacts in ITUC and the GUFs, in order to make more significant progress in this region. We anticipate that our affiliates will become more active in the regional co-ordination of activities through new regional structures of StreetNet directly managed by our affiliates.

StreetNet's strength lies in our affiliates

We anticipate more of our affiliates achieving results in influencing policy (both at local and national government level) in their countries, and using StreetNet's international networks to spread their influence to other countries and international forums. We hope to see more of a culture of independence and self-sufficiency developing, at least among our stronger affiliates, as well as stronger women's leadership at every level. There is the possibility that when we complete the current

UNI-StreetNet programme, we may be able to implement a second phase - not necessarily confined to the same Francophone West African region where we have been working from 2005 - 2007. We also hope to extend our PSI-StreetNet programme, and continue to network with other global union federations (GUFs) in our work.

In conjunction with IFWEA (to which StreetNet is affiliated) and its other affiliates, we hope to make more progress in developing worker education in the informal economy. We hope that during this next three-year period we will be able to intensify the effectiveness of StreetNet International and its affiliates in developing new policy frameworks, using the following as the basis:

- the results of the international meeting held in Senegal in March 2007 on collective bargaining in the informal economy, laws and litigation in the street vending sector;
- the international meeting on the theme of urban planning and policy development to be held in Delhi in May 2008;
- solidarity and alliances developed through our own campaigns such as the WCCA campaign and continued participation in other international campaigns such as the Decent Work for a Decent Life campaign.

New areas in which we hope to make more active progress (in terms of activities on the ground) during the next three years are:

1. Disabled street vendors, informal market vendors and hawkers;
2. HIV/AIDS and its effects on and implications for our sector;
3. Class relations and employment relations between street vendors, informal market vendors and hawkers within our organisations;
4. World trade issues, their effects on and implications for our sector.

Worker Education for the informal economy - StreetNet and Ditsela hold "train the trainer" workshop

StreetNet and Ditsela (Development Institute for Training, Support and Education in Labour) a South African Worker Education institution, jointly convened a Train-the-Trainer workshop in Johannesburg on organising workers in the informal economy from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. The four-day workshop took place from 2 - 6 July 2007.

Sixteen participants from SADC informal economy organisations attended. Organisations represented were ZCIEA by Elijah Muemeri and Beauty Mugijima (Zimbabwe), OTM, by Ana Timana (Mozambique), MUFIS by Mwanda Chiwambala (Malawi), TUICO by Hassan Chamzim (Tanzania), KTB by Tsolo Lebitsa (Lesotho), NAMSTA by Veripi Kandenge (Namibia), AZIEA by Estellah Chisenga and WEAZ by Chisandi Kunda and Mike Chungu (Zambia), SATAWU by Oupa Oldjohn Siyenge, Co-op Silwa Nobuphofu by Thandiwe Xulu, ASEZA Co-op by Nolesini Marhola (South Africa), WCCA Campaign by Cheche Selepe (Gauteng South Africa) and Thabo Petrus Louw (Northern Cape) and CIEAS by Khangeziwe Mkhathshwa (Swaziland).

The aims of the workshop were to:

1. Create worker education capacity for vulnerable workers in the SADC region including those in the informal economy.
2. Strengthen the organization of vulnerable workers, including those working in the informal economy, in the countries of the SADEC region.
3. Provide worker education for new initiatives for organising unorganised categories of formal and informal works in vulnerable situations.
4. Provide worker education for new initiatives for organizing unorganised categories of formal and informal workers in vulnerable situations.
5. Promote organisational solutions to counter the measures of globalisation which are squeezing workers out of secure formal employment.

The workshop started by focussing directly on globalisation, to explore the key manifestations of globalisation and its effect on the informalisation of work and to develop an understanding of the core challenges confronting workers in the informal economy. Participants broke into groups and created collages using images and text, pieces of paper and cloth. During the plenary session, participants discussed why informal work is such a central issue today and how men and women are affected differently and particularly, the impact on women workers and the increase of poverty. Participants discussed trade union organising in the informal economy, the principle of solidarity work between workers in the formal economy and workers in the informal economy and gaining a first hand understanding of the needs and demands of informal economy workers. Participants travelled to meet women food vendors working outside the FNB stadium near Soweto which is being extended for the 2010 FIFA World Cup. The vendors had been organising to protect their rights to sell food to workers after they were chased away by construction bosses.

The workshop looked at the following real live case studies: first, the Ghana TUC which took the step of forming an informal economy desk to reach out to the millions of informal workers to become truly representative. In Ghana 80%-85% of the workforce is in the informal economy. The second case study on the Philippines looked at an approach which has used co-operatives as a way to build productivity and therefore, income levels for informal workers living at subsistence levels. The third case study was on SEWA in India which is the biggest union of informal workers in India and in the world. SEWA's main goals are to achieve full employment for self-employed women who form 94% of the labour force, by work security, income security and social security through unionisation and cooperative development. Nonetheless SEWA had to fight for recognition as the Labour Dept claimed that there had to be an employer relationship for workers to join. SEWA's argument was that it was the trade union's job to unite workers, regardless of their employment relationship. Two more case studies provided the examples of informal economy trade unions' struggle for legal recognition: one formed in Holland by sex-workers to defend their rights called the Red Thread, and another in the Philippines called Makalaya which has combined trade unionism and community organising to demand more

responsiveness from formal trade unions in solving the problems of informal women workers.

The final activity on negotiations in the context of the informal economy, aimed to identify negotiating issues, demands and counterparts looking at several scenarios in which negotiations could be called for. Two of these were: an informal union's struggle for legal recognition and registration by a Labour Department and second, a union organising informal and formal workers must extend outdated laws and re-define definitions of "worker" and "trade union" so that all workers, informal and formal workers, are protected by labour legislation.

Training materials which have been developed for the International Federation of Worker Education Associations (IFWEA) Southern and East African project, were adapted and the facilitation was done by StreetNet, the Workers' Education Association of Zambia (WEAZ) and Ditsela.

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IFWEA's 20th Annual Congress: Workers' Education in the Informal Economy on the agenda

The 20th International Federation of Worker Education Associations (IFWEA) Congress "Workers' Education in the Informal Economy", was held from 1-5 December 2007 in Ahmadabad, India. Delegates from worker organisations from all over the world celebrated the 60 years of IFWEA which is the single independent forum operating at global level whose exclusive interest is workers' education. The outgoing General Secretary, David Spooner, in the opening note stated that "the celebration of 60 years of IFWEA was a significant achievement, a testament to successive generations of workers' education leaders, practitioners and activists who have given their energy and commitment to our international movement." Delegates discussed workers' education in the informal economy at a two-day seminar and developed recommendations for a four-year plan on informal economy worker education for adoption during the congress discussion on programmes and activities.

Seminar objectives

1. To build awareness among IFWEA member organisations and partners of various worker education experiences aimed at supporting the democratic organisation of informal economy workers.
2. To enable representatives of the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) to share their work in building a million-strong union of informal economy workers.
3. To use these experiences as a basis for hearing what works and what does not, so as to expand and strengthen programmes and activities designed to defend informal economy workers' rights.
4. To consolidate, expand and strengthen IFWEA's education activities with workers in the informal economy through discussion and debate.
5. To record key observations and develop a series of recommendations for building workers' education in the informal economy. On the first day, informal economy organising experiences were shared.

Two perspectives on the theme Organising in the informal economy - The Workers' Agenda were presented. Arbind Singh of NASVI, presented a paper based on the experiences of an informal economy workers' association, while Marao Raimondo, General Secretary OTM, Mozambique spoke from the perspective of a trade union organising in the informal economy. Four workshops "Learning from the Experiences of the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA)" were held and included:

- Organising Informal Economy Workers (how SEWA has built its membership to become the largest union of informal working women), led by Manali Shah;
- Social Security (how the six organisations for social security provision contribute to members' social protection), led by Mirai Chatterjee;
- Micro-finance & Capitalisation (SEWA Bank), led by Jayshree Vyas;
- Income generation, Rural Development and Co-operatives (how these build and consolidate SEWA's membership base), led by Bharti Bhavsar and Uman Swaminathan.

In the afternoon, a session on "context, experience and strategies", produced recommendations to feed into discussions focused on the four-year plan for informal economy education.

- New materials and new approaches
- Organising and educating
- Promoting solidarity

On the second day, discussion was structured around how informal economy worker's organisation can be supported and drawing on the presentations made the previous day participants developed a draft four-year education plan for workers' education in the informal economy.

Resolutions passed by delegates at the Conference emphasised the importance of building workers' organisation and education in different sectors, particularly the informal economy. The Conference resolved to "build a long term worldwide programme of workers' education to support the organisation of informal economy workers, based on capacity building and training in each region, supported by full-time regional programme staff."

Susan Schuman of AFL-CIO/NLC/Rutgers was elected President, Sahra Ryklief of the LRS of South Africa was elected Secretary General. Namrata Bali of SEWA, Paroli Gyorgy de Mszosz of Hungary, Karl Setter of ABF, Sweden and Juan Carlos Vargas de Plades, Peru, were elected vice-presidents.

SEWA's visit to CNTS in Senegal

By Seyni Man. Ndiaye, Secretary in Charge of Informal Sector CNTS, Senegal and Falguni Patel and Aisa Suleman Pathan, SEWA, India

The exchange visit was discussed by StreetNet affiliates SEWA and CNTS Women's Committee and a programme drawn up for the visit for information-sharing and learning about the work the respective organisations are doing to develop social security schemes for their members - women working in the informal economy. After corresponding with each other to plan the programme and draw up a budget for the first part of the exchange visit, the SEWA delegation's visit to Senegal took place between 14-29 Nov 2007.

The delegation comprising SEWA members Falguni Patel and Aisa Suleman Pathan, were welcomed by a delegation from CNTS led by Fatou Bintou, President of the Women's Committee on the 15th November at the CNTS office. This was followed by a briefing with all the board members of CNTS. Lastly, before closing the session, the visiting delegation shared briefly about the SEWA social security programme for its members.

The SEWA visitors learnt that Senegal is a country having a population of 10.5 million. They have 3-4 million workers in the formal economy. The rest are informal sector workers. It is mainly an agricultural country and few industries exist. Many industries in the field of textiles and fishing were shut down and as a result, many workers were affected. CNTS started to organise informal workers. The majority of the workers who lost work were women.

CNTS is the biggest trade union in Senegal. Membership of informal sector workers is 24 000 and for formal sector workers is 60 000. CNTS has started a bank (mutual for credit) for their women members so that they can borrow and build income with the objective of establishing solidarity. Some of the reasons for the mutual are:

- Financing is an option that helps women to expand their work and increase their income.
- Women's main problem is access to financial resources, social protection and social security.
- Informal sector workers are not taken into account by the authorities.
- Workers in the informal economy can work when young and usually have access to income. However, they have no protection in their old age as there is neither work nor any kind of social security.
- Since the government is not doing anything about providing social security to the informal sector, CNTS feels that it is the trade union's responsibility to do something about it.

The CNTS Women's Committee

The Committee was formed by members of CNTS, associations of women, women of Economic Interest Group (EIG) and street vendors. Every CNTS union in all regions of Senegal has a Committee of Women (CW), managed by the CW president. The objective is to have more people in the Committee of Women and also to bring women to a decision-making position, to have women occupy the national space and have the same advantages as other members. The government has been planning to have a structure for the informal economy but with a new Government in power, the implementation has been delayed.

CNTS calls street vendors' meeting

SEWA visitors Falguni and Aisa noted on the 15th November:

In the morning, we were told that the street vendors in Dakar were being harassed a lot by the police. The president has ordered to get all the streets cleared up for an Islamic summit coming up in March 2008. The police not only drive away the vendors but also arrest the vendors and take into custody their sellable items (that are never returned). Hence the vendors are facing a tough time at the moment. In order to address this issue, CNTS had arranged a meeting with all concerned - board members

and representatives. We were introduced to all those present. ...There was a good turnout of people for this meeting.

Day 2: 16 Nov 07 - Visit to social security office

Madjiguène Medor facilitated the meeting between the delegation of visitors and the Women's Committee with the Social Security office of Senegal, where they were briefed on their social security programme for the family, and disability benefits for the workers in the formal sector. If an informal sector worker wants to join, she pays a monthly fee of 60 FCFA (US\$ 0.14). However, most don't like to join this programme because of the formalities with which they have to comply, some of which would preclude them.

The president of the administration council of the Mutuelle d'Épargne et de Crédit for workers solidarity (MECSO), presented on the structure of the institution, emphasising its mission and its development plan. M Alioune Fall, General Secretary of the Fund, explained in detail the implementation plan for social protection in the informal sector. A document which provided more information had been compiled and was given to the SEWA delegation.

In the afternoon the delegation visited a taxi station. From this taxi station, outstation ferrying is done: so it is a home to many drivers and many other workers. They met the local women leader of the area and later, many women workers engaged in different trades - running restaurants, selling car oil and spare parts, doing laundry, ironing, selling dry fish, and others. The SEWA delegation noted a similarity to some of the communities in Ahmedabad, particularly "Bhaipura", "Chamanpura" and the "Shankar Bhuvan" area.

Day 3: 17 Nov 07 - Visit to Rufique town market

On the third day the delegation was welcomed by Fatou Thioune, the President of the Rufique Town Association. She is herself a garment stitcher. They were taken for a walk through the town to meet with the members of the association and met market and street vendors (most of them were fruit vendors), dyers and beauticians. Again, the SEWA delegation observed how similar the problems of vendors in Senegal are to those of Indian vendors, when the vendors said that they are harassed by the police since vending is not considered legal.

Meeting with Sandaga Market vendors

Back in Dakar, the delegation went to the Sandaga market. Unfortunately, on this day, the authorities had initiated a "cleaning operation" and chased vendors from the street. Notwithstanding, the bitter atmosphere, the delegation was able to visit some of the stalls, to discuss and share with some of the people there and to express their support. Falguni and Aisa noted:

Sandaga market in Dakar is one of the main market places of the city. So we were able to meet many vendors. We also visited a vegetable and meat market. Half the street was deserted mainly because of police patrolling. Some of the vendors were there but they were not selling. They shared with us that some of them had put their belongings in the shop on the street. But they are never sure when the shopkeeper can turn down their request of providing a space for their belongings out of the fear

of police... . We shared with them the plight of vendors in India that is very similar to theirs.

Some of the vendors also shared with us that when the present president wanted to come into power he allowed all street vendors to continue with their work. But now that he has been elected he has forgotten all his promises and wants to chase away the street vendors under the pretext of traffic congestion and wanting to clear it for upcoming Islamic Summit.

We were informed that CNTS along with concerned associations is organizing a March on 21/11/07, Wednesday. The march will be from CNTS office to radio broadcasting office. As per our understanding it will be a silent march with no one speaking or protesting but to put their point forward to the Government that whatever that is happening is not correct. Their concern is that the authority should allocate the vendors a vending place so that it is win-win situation for everyone.

On Sunday, the visitors were taken to a nearby island called Gore Island. The island used to be an important port for trading of slaves. Slavery existed in the 16th century and lasted for 400 years.

Day 5: 19 Nov 07 - Visit to Credit Mutual in Pikine District

On the last day the delegation visited one of the banks in the nearby Pikine district where Madame Syni Mané Ndiaye, president of EIG, presented on the structure and explained the functioning of the system and the features of the credit bank (mutual) and its community shop. They learned about the "Economic Interest Group - EIG" (similar to Self Help Group - SHG in India). Women in the informal sector join an EIG. Mainly, they are in need of finances most of the time to carry out their activities or expand their work. Since the EIG is also a part of the bank they get the benefit of getting loans from the bank whenever needed. Apart from that, the other members of EIG contribute in some way when any woman in a group has some ceremony at her place. The minimum strength of an EIG is 7 members while the maximum is 30 members. 60 groups together make one zone. During the course of our conversation, we learned that the average income of workers in the informal economy is 3000 - 4000 FCFA (US \$7 - 9). Women need to save a minimum of 1000 FCFA monthly (US\$2).

Evaluation of the visit

The last activity of the visit was the evaluation. The visits made by the delegation were discussed. Overall, it was a good experience for both sides. In conclusion, the working visit of the delegation of SEWA was successfully accomplished and very much appreciated by all parties. SEWA looks forward to the second half of the visit which will be made by the CNTS delegation to SEWA in India, to learn about its social security and health programmes for its members.

Exchange: Visit CTCP, Nicaragua visits FNOTNA, Mexico

By Orlando Mercado, CTCP, Nicaragua

As part of the StreetNet exchange visit programme CTCP, Nicaragua, discussed and planned a visit with FNOTNA in Mexico. The visit took place from 25th-28th November 2007. The delegation of the self-employed workers from Nicaragua (CTCP) making the exchange visit to meet and learn from FNOTNA, our Mexican counterparts organising street and market vendors of the informal economy, was constituted of four comrades: Orlando Jose Mercado, head of the delegation as Vice-co-ordinator of CTCP-FNT, Marvin Marengo Corea, Secretary for International Relations, Sandra Flores Jimenes, Secretary for Minutes and Agreements, and Maria Teresa Sanchez, Secretary of Markets Union.

The CTCP delegation was received by Gilberto Vasquez Muro, General Secretary of FNOTNA, the national federation of non-salaried workers of Mexico. We then met with Augustin Serna Servin, the General Secretary of CROC of Nuevo Leon, who briefed us about the organisation of the unsalaried workers in Nuevo Leon.

Between Thursday the 25th of November and Saturday the 27th of November 2007 we took part in the following activities:

- We met with Jose Benito Reyes, the CROC's General Secretary of Unsalariated workers of Nuevo Leon to discuss how the unsalaried workers are being integrated into social insurance plans.
- A meeting with the general secretaries of the mobile markets of Nuevo Leon city.
- A meeting was held with the Director of the Institute of the Workers's Technology University, Edilberto Cervantes Galvan, where he talked about the institute and its programme for the workers.
- We attended a press conference with the media department of CROC.
- Director of Commerce of Monterrey, Professor Jesus Fernandes Garza, met with us to present the work that is being done jointly with the organisations of unsalaried workers, which we thought was very positive.

To learn more about the mobile markets, the visiting delegation did an educational walk to visit the markets of the city of Nuevo Leon. We had the opportunity to see how these comrades work with the system of mobile markets and saw how it is organised so that routes are defined and markets work on these routes on agreed days.

On Sunday the 28th, we travelled to the Federal District of Mexico City. In the federal district, we visited the markets of the city and we participated in the ordinary council of the FNOTNA (National Federation of Unsalariated Workers' Organisations), where we were able to share experiences with some of the leaders who were present.

Our delegation issued a special invitation to FNOTNA to become a part of our alliance of Informal Economy Unions of Central America and Panama (SEICAP), which CTCP is directing to address the negative effects of globalisation in our sector.

We think it is very important that Mexico becomes part of our alliance so that in the future, it co-ordinates with other organisations of Latin America to keep on with the

struggle for the recognition and the respect for self-employed workers' rights. United, organised and empowered we will be unbeatable!

Street Vendors are being deceived by authorities in Caracas

By Yolanda Wundheiler, Venezuelan correspondent Beun Dia Prosie 65, newsletter of CSI ORIT for the Informal Economy

Several thousand street vendors from Sabana Grande, Caracas, Ecuador who were not counted in an official census by the Libertador municipality now have no means to earn a living. For street vendors it seems that the municipality is trying to provide a solution to the relocation of streets vendors by completely ignoring the people affected.

Firstly, the census taken by the mayor's office of Libertador municipality revealed that there are 2 900 informal vendors. According to data provided by the street vendors, the number is over 5 000, leaving more than 2 000 informal economy workers out of the relocation plan.

Secondly, of the 2 900 street vendors who were identified by the census, the Mayor's Office carried out a purge, that resulted in the exclusion of 47 minors, 98 illegal immigrants, 62 senior citizens and 21 disabled people. The Municipality's explanation is that senior citizens will receive a special pension and disabled people will be employed at the Municipality. SINTRAINOR General Secretary, José Chaurán, says these numbers don't do justice to the truth. "It is impossible to have found minors and illegal immigrants, as being of age and Venezuelan nationality were two compulsory requirements for the census". After the census, the Mayor's Office only met with them once so that they could check whether the list of names which they had compiled corresponded with those of people affiliated to their organisations. Chaurán says no-one was rejected by the union, but when he read the list again two weeks later fewer people were listed.

Thirdly, after 67 days of waiting and 13 postponements of the public draw for stalls, only 1 550 persons were awarded a place, leaving around 3500 street vendors without an opportunity to work and earn a livelihood. With the possibility that workers in the informal economy who were excluded may begin to mobilise with the object of reclaiming their right to work, the Mayor's Office has threatened to apply the law to those street vendors who protest or who try to erect their stalls once again in the boulevard of the Sabana Grande. Chaurán, representing the excluded workers, said that it is very unfair that the workers have to confront the municipal apparatus. Street vendors are asking why the Mayor does not want real and structural solutions to the problem of the street vendors. Why does he not make the laws more flexible and facilitate the process of their formalisation within the economy?

Waste Pickers without Frontiers

By Chris Bonner, WIEGO, Organisation and Representation

The first world conference of informal waste pickers, is due to take place in Bogota, Colombia from the 1-4 March 2008. Conference participants will come from Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America to discuss the common challenges they face and begin to develop a common agenda.

Representatives from waste picker organisations, worker organisations such as StreetNet, and supportive NGOs, agencies and researchers will participate.

Conference aims

The main aim of the Conference is to strengthen the organisation and global connection of informal waste pickers - women and men- as a first step towards building an international network. It also aims to strengthen the Latin American Network of Waste Pickers, consisting of worker cooperatives and cooperative federations from different Latin American countries.

Informal waste pickers make a major contribution to the economy, health and environmental protection. However, in most countries, the general public and authorities fail to recognise this. The Conference hopes to make visible their contribution, and work towards effective voice and representation of waste pickers in all forums affecting their working lives and social position.

The Conference will start by celebrating the Colombian National Day of Waste Pickers on 1st March. Hundreds of waste pickers from around Bogota will be there to celebrate this day. On the second and third days, participants will share their experiences of organising, and discuss pressing issues such as the effect of privatisation and public policies on informal waste pickers. They will plan how to take forward regional and international networking. On day four they will visit worker cooperatives and recycling projects in Bogota to see for themselves, progress in Colombia. WIEGO (Women in Informal Employment: Global-ising and Organising) initiated the global networking project.

WIEGO built contacts with waste picker organisations, NGOs and researchers across the globe. It set up an international steering committee to jointly organise the Conference, resulting in shared ownership of the project and a collaborative effort across global frontiers.

Partners and Conference Organisers are: Women in Informal Employment: Globalising and Organising (WIEGO); Latin America Network of Waste Pickers; National Association of Waste Pickers of Colombia (host); KKPKP (Waste picker union, India); AVINA Foundation; Collaborative Working Group on Solid Waste Management (CWG).

Conference website: www.recicladores.net

News Briefs

NEST's 2nd National Conference

StreetNet affiliate in Nepal, NEST held its 2nd National Conference on January 9-10, 2008. With the theme "Our campaign for decent employment, safe work, peace and stability" the conference was started with a rally from Sundhara and then proceeded to the inauguration function at National Assembly Hall in Kathmandu. Around 150 representatives participated in the Conference - 115 from 25 districts of the country and the remainder were from capital city - Kathmandu. The 2nd National Conference elected a 23-member central committee where Narayan Neupane is president and Janardan Parajuli, Kumar Sapkota, Maiya Gurung and Anamika Shrestha were elected as Vice-President, General Secretary, Deputy General Secretary respectively.

CTCP-FNT Nicaragua, holds congress

CTCP - FNT, Nicaragua, held its 6 annual congress on 16 December 2007 in Managua. CTCP has 33 000 affiliates, 87 trade unions, five trade union federations and a Women's Committee for building and strengthening the participation of women, and a Youth Committee. The Congress elected the following office bearers: Adrian Martinez Rodriguez, Secretary General, Orlando Jose Mercado Secretary of Organisation, Ernesto Ortiz Aguirre, Treasurer and Flor de Maria Avellán, Secretary of the Women and Children Committee.

Lesotho - Sweat and tears as hawkers are chased from the streets

By Lebohang Chefa, Information and Communications Officer, Transformation Resource Centre, Lesotho

Maseru - A peaceful prayer meeting ended in sweat and tears when armed units of police opened fire at a group of street vendors in Maseru on Monday, 26 November 2007. The police fired teargas and pellets in the midst of the crowd sending the street vendors across the streets and up the Maseru hill to take cover and save their lives. The prayer meeting had been organised by Khathang-Tema Baitšukuli, an organisation of more than 300 street vendors across Lesotho.

The organisation's chairperson, Tšolo Lebitsa said they learned earlier that the Maseru City Council was planning an eviction of certain hawkers from the streets, especially from the main Kingsway Street. He said they have also sought solidarity from the taxi operators associations, factory workers unions and other workers. "We are contemplating a stay away to force the Maseru City Council into dialogue."

The Lesotho Congress of Democratic Unions [LECODU] denounced the incident that took place in Maseru Central business district against informal economy operators. LECODU said the measures taken by Maseru City Council were ill conceived as "the livelihood of vast majority of people who by their own ingenuity and tenacity eke out

a living through survival strategies are being jeopardized by perpetrators of the inhuman actions.” (Source: LECODU statement on 26th November, 2007; Press statement issued by TRC, Lesotho.)

World Social Forum International Day of Action - “Another World is possible!”

The World Social Forum (WSF) made a call for a global day of collective action to be organised in the localities where social movements and organisations are based on the 26th of January, 2008.

In response to the WSF call for collective action, StreetNet and Durban street vendor organisations joined the WSF Festival for Social Change - The State of the People/ASINAMALI on 26th January hosted by Social Movements Indaba and the Centre for Civil Society (UKZN) at Diakonia Centre, Durban, South Africa.

At the discussion on People’s Economy, facilitated by StreetNet Co-ordinator Pat Horn, participants representing informal economy organisations from Durban decided to formulate demands around what a World Class City For ALL, which includes the need of the urban poor, should really look like and to plan action around these demands. Organisations present were street traders (Eye Traders Association), street barbers (Sisonke), Timberwatch, concerned with the social and economic effects of timber plantations, and an alliance of informal fishermen who are environmental activists from the South Durban basin (The South Durban Community Environmental Alliance - SDCEA). The concerns raised included respect and recognition of informal work, income security of all its workers, development and building skills rather than destruction of livelihoods particularly for women who are supporting households, making space for and building African markets, valuing and building on the people’s entrepreneurial efforts and resourcefulness instead of prioritising big business and commercial interests.

Making it happen on WSF Website

StreetNet also responded to the WSF by registering on the WSF2008 website (www.wsf.2008.net) to build the visibility of informal economy organisation and street vendors, and link with the Durban Festival for Social Change Action Space on the web. StreetNet was among more than 800 global organizations and social movements who took part in the Global Call for Action on the worldwide web.

Ligue pour le Droit de la Femme Congolaise

Angélique Kipulu Katani Secretary General of Ligue pour le Droit de la Femme Congolaise (LDFC), StreetNet affiliate, sent its programme of action which was posted on the world map of Global Action on WSF website and StreetNet also added its solidarity.to the LDFC action. LDFC hosted a public debate on the problem of illegal taxes (“Tax Anarchiques”) that women market and street vendors are forced to pay by police and security guards in the informal economy which was attended by 80 people in Kinshasa. Angelique Kipuli Katani explained what WSF Global Day of Action

was and the history of the World Social Forum. She encouraged informal traders to pay the taxes they are required to as these go towards providing schools, infrastructure and for police etc, but to refuse to pay illegal taxes. She proposed that 26th be marked every year by LDFC in working towards "Another World".

The launch of Sisonke Traders' Alliance

By Gaby Bikombo, President of Siyagunda Association

An alliance of street traders and other organisations of informal economy workers in the province of Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa, was launched on Wednesday 28th November 2007, under the name of Sisonke Trader' Alliance. The three Durban-based street vendors' organisations which are Siyagunda Association, The Eye Traders' Association and Phoenix Plaza Street Traders' Association, joined forces to initiate this umbrella body in order to be able to engage with the provincial and the local governments on all issues regarding the informal economy as a whole, as well as to identify and/or organise other informal economy organisations/ workers in the province, among other things.

It is with the organisational support of StreetNet and the South African Communist Party (SACP), that the process we started in May 2006 led to the formation of Sisonke Traders' Alliance towards the end of 2007. The following are the Alliances' objectives.

- To unite street traders and other informal economy workers' organisations in an umbrella body, in order to speak with a much stronger and united voice, and be heard;
- To identify and assist with the formation of street vendors' as well as informal workers organisations and encourage them to join Sisonke;
- To undertake training, information and education activities for our members' organisations and their members;
- To collaborate with and/or affiliate to other bigger international organisations that have the interests of the informal sector at heart;
- To support as much as possible, street vendors and other informal traders and their families to earn a living;
- To protect and assist members through HIV/AIDS awareness, prevention and possibly treatment programmes;
- To work towards the provision of child care, social security and access to micro-loans.

Approximately 150 street vendors and members of the organisations attended. The programme included introductions by each of the founding organisations in the Alliance, a poem recital by Veronica Xama of the Eye Traders' Association, and a speech by guest speaker of the Eastern Cape Street Vendors' Alliance, Fundile Jalile. The representative of the Deputy Mayor of eThekweni Municipality, Mr Thulani Nzama, encouraged the organisations in the alliance under Sisonke, to ensure their voices are heard in collective bargaining. After the speeches, we proceeded with the adoption of the constitution before the election of six executive committee members (two from each organisation) who were tasked with leading the new Alliance.

COGEC becomes a national union

COGEC (Le Collectif des Gérants de Cabine Cellulaires de Cocody), the organisation of cabin cell phone vendors which started in Cocody, Ivory Coast has launched as a national organisation. The organisation now called Syndicat National des Commerçants de produits télécoms (SYNACOTEL) held its first congress on 19th January, 2008. Coulibaly Sory Haumar was elected as Secretary General and Dougone Lou Heniette and Kouame Epse Beugré Blandine were elected as member's auditors. COGEC is a participant in the StretNet-UNI three-year informal economy organisation capacity-building programme.