



## StreetNet News

No.13 July 2008

*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](mailto:stnet@iafrica.com) visit the website: [www.streetnet.org.za](http://www.streetnet.org.za)

*StreetNet News No. 13* [www.streetnet.org.za/english/page5.htm](http://www.streetnet.org.za/english/page5.htm)

### Contents:

- International Conference on Urban Planning and Policy Development, Delhi, India
- International Conference Resolution on Urban Planning and Policy Development
- Exchange Visit: KENASVIT, Kenya visits NEST, Nepal  
**By Joyti Punjabi Vimo, SEWA and Seyni Mané Ndiaye and Annie Diouf, CNTS Women's Committee**
- Exchange Visit: CNTS, Senegal visit to SEWA, India  
**By Joyti Punjabi Vimo, SEWA and Seyni Mané Ndiaye and Annie Diouf, CNTS Women's Committee**
- First international Congress of Waste Pickers without Frontiers  
**By Chris Bonner, Wiego Organisation and Representation Programme**
- Southern Africa: Demand for regional trade protocols to include informal economy
- StreetNet Statement on Xenophobic Attacks in South Africa
- Argentina: SIVARA wins battle for recognition of street vendors  
**By Oscar Roberto Silva, SIVARA, Argentina**

**INCLUSIVE PLANNING FOR THE URBAN POOR**  
**International Conference on Urban Planning and Policy Development**  
**Delhi, India**

The International Conference on Urban Planning and Policy Development "World Class Cities FOR ALL!!! - Inclusive Planning For The Working Poor" was hosted by StreetNet International, the National Alliance of Street Vendors of India (NASVI), and the Delhi University Dept. of Social Work, from 14-16th April 2008, in Delhi, India.

The decision to hold the three-day conference was taken by the StreetNet International Council at its May 2007 meeting and was attended by all StreetNet affiliates and representatives from NASVI and SEWA. An extended International Council meeting was held after the conference on the 17 and 18th of April, 2008. The objective of the conference was to change the mindset of the planners and judges and to encourage a move towards inclusive planning for the urban poor and to strengthen the participation and input that street vendors' organisations make to the planning and policy processes.

The conference was opened by Shikha Joshi, secretary of NASVI, who presented the welcome note and emphasised that various developments at the global level in the name of the beautification of the city with the rise of private companies in the retail business due to globalisation. She said that these have severely affected the lives and livelihood of the street vendors and hawkers worldwide. The conference was formally inaugurated by Prof. Arjun Sengupta, Chairman, National Commission on Enterprise in Unorganized Informal, Government of India (NCEUIS) by the lighting of a symbolic lamp. Nozipho Lembethe, International Administrator of StreetNet, introduced each of the foreign delegates to the international conference. Arbind Singh (NASVI) briefly introduced the delegates from NASVI who had travelled from different parts of the country.

Prof. S. K. Tandon, pro-Vice Chancellor, University of Delhi, welcomed all the delegates as a co-host of the conference. Quoting the words of town planner Jane Jacobs it was noted that "cities are vibrant living systems, not the products of grand, utopian schemes, concocted by overzealous planners".

Prof. Sanjai Bhatt, Head of the Department of Social Work, University of Delhi, said that participants had travelled from their countries and towns and villages because of a commitment to the basic values of social justice and human rights. He said in the context of the approaching Common-wealth Games (2010) in Delhi NASVI's call for World Class Cities FOR ALL!! and the demand for inclusive planning that would involve the urban poor in the decisions that affect them in the preparations for the Games was an important proactive step, which deserved full support.

The next speaker Dr. Arjun Sengupta, Chairman, NCEUIS, said a review conducted by the Commission had highlighted the fact that street vendors play an important economic role and that they should be involved in the sub-processes of urban planning.

Renana Jhabvala, President, SEWA Bharat, noted with appreciation the part played by Ela Bhatt whose pioneering work it was of initiating the organisation SEWA and the movement of women workers in the informal economy 30 years ago. She conceived the idea of StreetNet in 1995 and this was taken forward concretely in 2000 when work was begun to do consultative workshops in Asia, Africa and Latin America to lay the foundation for StreetNet and its launch in 2002. Jhabvala said it was a concern that we have seen not a decrease but an increase in development that is ignoring the needs of street vendors.

Bringing up the issue of retail malls which were threatening the jobs of the urban poor, she

said that there are two approaches to deal with the issue - one to oppose these and the other to compete. She said that following the protests over retail malls being developed, the government had decided not to grant licences for development to the foreign companies.

Another important consideration was that it is the street vendors who represent the cultural uniqueness of the country, which attracts the tourists, rather than the shopping malls. Lastly, she said as women are being driven out of the unorganised sector in India due to the increase in violence, it has become imperative to have women's markets.

Krishna Prasad Shah, Vice President, NASVI, who spoke next, drew attention to the importance of the life of the vendors in small towns in India and their struggles for basic facilities and the new process of participation in the planning of new 'vending zones'.

Kim Heung-Hyun, President of StreetNet International, concluded the opening session by emphasising the concerns on planning that ignores the basic needs of the poor.  
Shared Experiences on Policies and Planning

In Session 2, the participants were divided into two groups to share their country specific experience of policy and planning. Many delegates related how their experience is of being at the receiving end of laws which were passed in another era and as such, these are hopeless in meeting the current needs of the people. There is also ignorance of the issues that affect street vendors, market vendors and hawkers. The call was for laws to be fully implemented and where applicable, to be replaced with new policies in consultation with street vendors' organisations. In some cases, such as in Uganda, it was heard that the attempts to negotiate a resolution to the crisis of eviction with government was successful. Market vendors who were confronted with eviction from the markets as result of urban renewal by a private developer, approached Parliament for assistance. This was successful in putting the issues of the women market traders' vulnerability to loss of a livelihood and hence the importance of the rights to a livelihood on the agenda. Government also halted the sale of public land on which markets are located.

No national policies had been drawn up with the involvement of street vendors' organisations with the exception of India, where the problems of implementation means that in many states street vendors, are still harassed. Broadly, the situation in all the countries for street vendors appeared to be similarly fraught with daily conflicts and difficulty.

In the second session Participation in Planning - Experiences of Street Vendors' Organizations, the following StreetNet delegates were invited to share their experiences.

**Orlando Mercado, CTCP, Nicaragua**, a street vendor, said that a major struggle took place between the police and street vendor community in 2002. 364 vendors were jailed. It took a two-month period of drawn-out negotiations before their freedom was restored. The main concerns of the street vending community of Nicaragua, were the absence of adequate health facilities, education and social justice. He asked how it was even thinkable that the street vendors who comprise such a large proportion of the population, cannot have a voice in the developmental policies of the State. It is the informal economy that creates about 50% of the Gross Domestic Product and pays 80% of the taxes as against the 20% contribution made by the formal sector.

**Martha Santayo, FNOTNA, Mexico**, said her parents were also street vendors and they were traumatised by the police atrocities and had to fight for their rights. She said that she believed that it is not only the government which is responsible for the present condition; we should also share the responsibility for our problems where appropriate. She asserted that the street vendor should be treated the same as other working citizens of the country. Street

vendors were ready to pay taxes to the government but in return demand fixed places for street vendors in the city as well as social justice and social security for them. She finally said that we must be united to fight for the cause of the street vendors.

**Angelique Kipulu Katani, LDFC, Congo**, said that the Congo is a big country, rich in minerals and agriculture but with the majority of people living in poverty. In the 1990s the Congo faced a severe economic depression which led to the loss of employment and livelihoods for many. Now approximately 85% of the people are in the informal sector. Even the rest, 15% , are indirectly dependent on the unorganised sector to supplement their income. Initially, she worked for a union whose main objective was to organise the workers in the organised sector. She related how her union had been approached by women who were trading across the border. She negotiated with the authorities who banned the trade because the amount of traffic was allegedly posing a public danger. As a result of her intervention, the women were able to continue to earn a living. There was inhumane treatment of women, confiscation of their property and some were even jailed. As the existing framework of the union did not provide for working with the informal sector workers, the policies and by-laws were modified to accommodate the informal sector. Katani ended by saying that an international platform is required to address issues of the vendors and the current conference is a good effort towards achieving this objective.

**Lameck Kashiwa, AZIEA, Zambia** said it had been a long process getting the state to be involved in the issues of the informal economy worker. However, this need had become more urgent because of the explosive growth of the informal sector and the massive retrenchments after the introduction of structural adjustment policies by the IMF and World Bank. He raised the issue of the failure to consult by the Government. The memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the European Union and the Zambian Government, provided that the government consult with the stakeholders i.e. the 'marketeers', in the process of developing a new market for them. After the MOU was reviewed by AZIEA, market organisations intervened to make a formal input on the kind of markets they needed. They listed following priorities: storage, security, electricity, water, garbage collection and management, formal forum for disputes, funds for health and growth, emphasis on open markets, education for 'marketeers' ' needs and so on. He said that the Government must be aware of 'Who we are' and 'What we need' in the informal economy. The current laws of Zambia do not provide a forum to discuss problems with the informal economy as a sector and the lack of consultation remains a continuous struggle.

**Sheik Fall, Street Vendor Project, New York**, introduced his organisation as one that was envisioned and raised by a street vendor who had eventually taken up the profession of law. He outlined how the street vending community in New York had realised it was important to identify concerns and strategies to create structures that would be used to negotiate with the authorities. The socio-demographic profile of the street vending community in New York is different from those in other nations, particularly Asian, African and Latin American regions. Many of the vendors are foreign emigrants.

**Kim Heung Hyun, KOSC, South Korea** at the outset explained that KOSC had been formed as result of the struggles of South Korean street vendors in Seoul during the hosting of international sporting events when street vendors had been repeatedly evicted from the streets in preparations for the sporting events. This proved the point that history repeats itself as in both India and South Africa, where international events are being hosted in 2010, the issue is now on the organising agenda. The World Class Cities For ALL Campaign demands of "No evictions without relocation" and for "Social Dialogue" are relevant everywhere. He said that the attitude of the Government has been to reduce the number of vendors to one tenth of their strength in Korea, even if it meant the hiring of gangs to do this. He added that KOSC has a history of 20 years but the organisation has been through a very critical period.

The vendors have been making a consistent effort to make alternative proposals to counter the big supermarket and businesses of multinational companies with whom they are forced to compete.

**Arbind Singh, NASVI, India**, stated that the National Policy on street vendors of the Government of India was adopted in 2004 and implementation at state level is a very slow process in which NASVI is involved. Further revisions have been recommended. Now the Government of India is also considering a Law for Street Vendors which the courts must recognise. Before the law is enacted, he said, that some states like Bhubaneswar and Pune, have proactively introduced the new state policy. In Pune, the policies have failed the interests of the poor; however, the same policy with participation by street vendors is showing positive results in Bhubaneshwar (see below).

In the next session Ajay Narayan, Finance Director of Lease Plan, an international company working in over 150 cities, discussed potential partnerships involving corporate social responsibility (CSR) with the street vending sector in strategies that focused on zoning and land use plans, the demarcation of vending zones, as well as infrastructure, housing, transport and sanitation through cooperation between the government, non-governmental organisations and the corporate sector.

In the afternoon session the participants broke into two groups to share their individual and country specific experiences on changing the mindset of planners, judiciary, executive and legislative organs of the government. Both groups reported that unjust laws and policies that see the street vendor as a 'nuisance' and even as 'criminal', have signalled the dire need for law reform and the need to raise the awareness of those in decision-making positions through a combination of approaches that include making formal approaches through collective bargaining and litigation as discussed at StreetNet workshop on Collective Bargaining in Senegal in 2007, by using the media and also by drawing on the sympathy of the consumers and the public.

Further, a concern was identified that there is the need to organise more effectively for rights to be fully understood, not only by street vendors as a sector, but equally by the courts and the planners who are tasked with interpreting and implementing the law.

Women delegates emphasised the need for equal status of women vendors to be raised by challenging the gender prejudice of courts and planners. Women's gender demands are different from men's, eg demands for childcare, and healthcare as well problems of harassment at work.

On the third day the final session was chaired by Helen Creed from the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection, Government of Western Australia. Anandan P. Menon, Programme Office, ILO cited various advocacy efforts that have been made in India in the past few years to support research and formulation of the national policy. He said that women's role is important and research by the ILO on poverty and rights of street vendors is being done.

Amod Kanth, General Secretary, Prayas (organisation of street children and homeless) was part of the committee formulating the National Policy on Urban Street Vendors of India. Citing the recent and ongoing instance of city renovation for the Commonwealth Games in 2010, Mr. Kanth said that the city is known as the engine of growth and while its growth is fuelled by the labour of the working poor, the moment the city is created, the poor are immediately removed out of sight. He emphasised that inclusive planning was crucial.

## **Municipal planning for 'Vending Zones'**

The presentation of Ashok Kumar Pattanaik, Deputy Commissioner, Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) looked at the result of the efforts to implement the state-level policy.

Bhubaneswar, a confluence of modern and ancient traditions, is regarded as a "Paradise for Street Vendors" largely as a result of the successful implementation of the policy by the state. Pattanaik said that Article 19 (I) g in the Constitution of India provides for the running of trade and businesses from pavements. He said that the situation of street vending is governed by Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) with the street vendors and their organisations.

The findings of a survey conducted by AORVA in Bhubaneswar had found that there were around 17 000 street vendors in the city, but this information is currently being updated.

He said the problems of street vendors cannot be tackled in isolation and numerous programmes have been initiated by the BMC for street vendors. These include:

- structures for lodging grievances and regular meetings;
- introducing Citizens' Report Card and Citizen's Charter,
- timely evaluation;
- a data base of street vendors;
- a programme of micro-enterprise, linking beneficiaries with banks;
- provision of social security;
- BMC declaration of new 'Vending Zones' in consultation with the vendors;
- planned relocation of vendors in consultation with vendors to alternative trading sites;
- on going effort to identify new sites and land for 'Vending Zones'.

## **INCLUSIVE PLANNING FOR THE WORKING POOR International Conference on Urban Planning and Policy Development Delhi, India RESOLUTION**

The draft committee members were part of an extensive brainstorming session and consequently drafted the following resolution which was adopted by the general assembly unanimously.

Having regards to conference

1. The informal sector especially the street vendors, small traders, hawkers are face to face with massive everyday problems including police and state repressions. After the coming of multinational companies and big national companies in retail business of daily utility commodities makes the life of these poor and marginalised sections of society more vulnerable and miserable.

This international conference resolves to oppose the entry of multinational and big national companies to start the retail business and calls for international campaign and movement against these companies . Hence, we urge governments:

To stop giving licence to them to open retail counters for sale of vegetables, fruits and

other daily utilities.

2. The development of cities cannot be viewed by better infrastructure, big buildings, roads and flyovers, but must be measured by the life of common and poor people because they are the part of the cities and they contribute immensely towards economy especially street vendors and hawkers. Needless to say that without them we cannot imagine inclusive cities. However, in recent times in the name of beautifications their markets are being displaced and they lose their employment and source of livelihood.

Hence this international conference urge for the government:

To give representation of organisations of street vendors and hawkers in the urban planning programmes.

We are not opposing the growth of cities but are simply asking for the building of viable markets for these sections and save employment rights of poor people.

3. The street vendors, small traders and hawkers are contributing to the total GDP of countries. Their contribution to economy cannot be ignored. But in the present scenario they are not legally protected and are always harassed by police and municipal corporations. Hence to protect their livelihood we urge the governments to enact laws in favor of them:

- i. Provide identity cards and license to them
- ii. Formulate viable hawkers zone
- iii. No illegal evictions
- iv. Protect them under social security programme
- v. Provide basic facilities in their markets
- vi. Provide financial assistance and employment training for them
- vii. Develop proper mechanism to implement the law

4. The sharing of experiences help us resolve that all over world the problems of street vendors, hawkers, small traders is more or less same. So we should fight globally on their issues.

We also resolve that to solve their problems it is necessary:

- i. To form their organisation at each layers such as at local level, at national level, at international level,
- ii. To build their capacities to bargain and negotiate with state and local authorities
- iii. To strengthen their organisation and give support from national and international level
- iv. And if any organisation from any country has any problem we support them globally

5. All the problems of street vendors, small traders, hawkers are outcome of present economic and political system of countries across the globe wherein the politico-economic power is in the hands of few rich people of society, who eventually control the regimes.

Hence, we resolve that we must intervene in the political process of our country

We must be part of law/policy-making institutions

Our ultimate goal is to have that government which is pro-poor people and to oppose this political and economical system which is responsible for this problem.

The resolution referred to above was drafted by Diana Taulo (Malawi), Marthagracia

Santayo (Mexico), Oscar Robenfo Silva (Argentina), Wisborn Malaya (Zimbabwe), Jasent Nakayemba (Uganda), Fandy Gnahoui Clarisse Reine (Benin), Ghazanfar Nawab (India), Shikha Joshi (India), Mahesh Bora (India).

Minutes recorded by Poonam Mayuri, Vinod Supriya and Akanksha from Dept of Social Work, University of Delhi, Delhi, India.

## **KENASVIT, Kenya visits NEST, Nepal**

**By Benard Maingi Isika, Joint Secretary and Asha Sayedi Ibrahim, Joint Treasurer of KENASVIT and Umesh Upadhyaya, GEFONT Deputy Secretary-General**

The KENASVIT exchange visit to NEST in Nepal was a part of StreetNet's activities to strengthen the global solidarity of workers of the informal economy. The KENASVIT Management committee agreed on the dates to visit NEST from 12th-20th November 2007 and through e-mail communication, plans were made. Three delegates were proposed but due to financial constraint only two delegates could fly to Nepal.

On arrival on November 13, Benard Maingi Isika, Joint Secretary and Asha Sayedi Ibrahim, Joint Treasurer of KENASVIT, attended a welcome programme organised by NEST. Forty committee level activists participated in the welcome programme.

The KENASVIT delegates were informed of a census done of 24 national organizations. They have 76,000 members from both large and small federations. Trade unions have a population of between 24,000 to 26,000 members drawn from 92 tribes. The meeting emphasised the need for all members to join trade unions and federations regardless of one's gender. The NEST members were interested to learn about how KENASVIT was formed, about Kenya and the census of street vendors completed by NISCOF as part of its efforts to persuade the city council of the importance of street vending as the occupation of many thousands of people in Nairobi.

## **Visit to workplaces**

Immediately after attending the welcome programme organized by Sundhara, Rantapark Local Area Committee, the delegation visited the various workplaces in Kathmandu to observe the condition of street vendors. They also met with the displaced vendors of Mangal Bazar, Latitpur and talked with them about the problems they faced while vending in the street.

The KENASVIT visitors noted that street vendors in Nepal are very active and organised. Each street has a committee which is responsible for communication with members. The street vendors are given times to trade on the streets during the daytime and night. They do not pay any tax to the municipal council or the government.

## **Visit to Pokhara**

On November 14, the KENASVIT visitors went to Pokhara, about 200 km from Kathmandu and attended a meeting with Kaski District Committee members and

shared the problems faced by the vendors there. Kaski District Committee presented their efforts for the rights of workers and their efforts to work for positive development for them.

The delegates wrote: "We met groups of street vendors on the streets. Later we met with Mr Kumar, the organizing secretary of the central office who explained how their organisations, consisting of about 700 street vendors, work in the district."

On November 15, the visitors went to the GEFONT Gandaki Zonal office where they were introduced to the central organization and members and discussed the situation of street vendors. A comparison was made on how vendors in the streets of Nairobi and Nepal undertake their work. It was noted that there was not much difference between the work of informal traders in both countries, except that in Kenya vendors are harassed by the city council.

On November 17, they visited the GEFONT Central Office, Manmohan Labour Building, Putalisadak, Kathmandu and met with GEFONT Vice-President Bisnu Rimal and Umesh Upadhyaya, Deputy Secretary General. They held a discussion on the current political situation and the various problems of vendors due to lack of clear government policy.

On November 16 and 18, the committee took the KENASVIT visitors on a tour to visit places that are of national historic and religious interest, and the rivers and snowy planes of the Himalayas. They returned to Kenya on 19th November, 2007.

The KENASVIT visitors found the exchange very enlightening and enjoyable. "We were really impressed by the unity of purpose in NEST and the support that the members were giving their national office to enable it serve them effectively. We look forward to NEST's visit to Kenya."

The NEST delegation visit to Kenya in January 2008 had to be postponed because of the post-election conflict in Kenya.

## **CNTS, Senegal visit to SEWA, India**

**By Joyti Punjabi Vimo, SEWA and Seyni Mané Ndiaye and Annie Diouf, CNTS Women's Committee**

A delegation of the national Women's Committee of CNTS, Senegal composed of Seyni Mané Ndiaye, representative of the informal sector, and Annie Diouf, responsible for projects, travelled to India to spend 7 days, from 16 -21 January with SEWA in India. This was the second part of the exchange programme between CNTS and SEWA. The first leg was a visit by SEWA to CNTS Women's Committee in November 2007.

The delegates were met on 16th January by SEWA Secretary General, Joytiben . A meeting was held to discuss and plan the activities and to share a brief history of the organisation and its formation in 1972 as a union for self-employed women in the informal economy who had had no income or work security until then. SEWA has a membership of nearly a million members who are in different sectors of informal

economy work. We were introduced to the SEWA executive committee of 25 members who explained the different programmes that SEWA has formed in different sectors to meet its members' needs: insurance; banking for the poor; agriculture; health; textiles; co-operative management, audiovisual documentation and research. The visiting delegation noted that not one of the people in leadership who are in charge of the programmes, was men.

A field visit was made based on the agreed plan. It included the following:

- Shop No 40 which is SEWA's shop for vegetable vendors. This is a wholesale vegetable shop and plays a significant role for rural producers as it links rural producers with urban vendors. The visiting delegation learnt how the shop was formed and how it functions.
- SEWA Ayurvedic Centre which promotes traditional knowledge and treatment and enhances employment opportunities for SEWA members. The activities are raw material purchase, marketing and selling by health workers. The Centre has launched 15 products in the market.
- The urban union related to head loaders. The union structures, strategies to organise the unorganised, campaigns and policy issues were discussed. One of the aspects discussed in some detail is the need for the union to negotiate and do work with Government.
- Health, childcare and insurance activities were seen in both rural and urban areas. The Saroda village was an example of how SEWA promoted a health cooperative. Members are provided with healthcare, childcare and insurance. The visitors also learnt how SEWA has collaborated with hospitals in Ahmedabad to secure a 'cashless service' which enables women to obtain reimbursement after 24 hours of sickness.
- SEWA's TB lab and medicine shops: Medicines are sold at a reduced rate at the health co-operative to give affordable medical care. The shops also link patients with the other activities of SEWA, including referral care in different hospitals.
- SEWA's Trade Facilitation Centre (TFC) which is a garment production unit, and the marketing outlet Banascraft were visited. The TFC upgrades rural skills and artisans are provided with a market through Banascraft to sell their products.

On January 21, the last day of the visit, we visited Sabamarti where Mahatma Gandhi lived, called "Hridaya KUNJ" (hearth).

A meeting was held for evaluation of the visit of the CNTS delegation at which great appreciation was shared with the sisters from SEWA who had made the visit to India a lasting learning experience. On return it was the CNTS visitors' responsibility to report on the exchange visit to Mody Guiro Secretary General of CNTS and Fatou Bintou Yaffa Managara, President of the Women's Committee of CNTS. In summary, the visiting delegation see the visit as a very beneficial learning experience for women's informal economy organisation.

## **First world conference of Waste Pickers**

**By Chris Bonner, Wiego Organisation and Representation Programme**

Waste pickers in Bogota, Colombia, hosted a remarkable event at the beginning of

March this year (1-4 March 2008). From 34 countries across the globe, more than 250 representatives of waste picker organisations, supportive NGOs, development agencies, governments and private enterprises converged on the city. They were there for a three-in-one event: to attend the First World Conference of Waste Pickers and Third Latin American Conference of Waste Pickers, and to commemorate the National Day of the Waste Picker in Colombia on March 1st. WIEGO initiated the idea of a world conference, made the linkages between waste pickers in different countries, raised funds and was a key player in the international steering committee that organised the conference.

On the first day, more than 300 local waste pickers joined conference delegates for the commemoration. Speakers shared experiences of the struggles and achievements of Colombian waste pickers and gave an overview of the situation of waste pickers across the world.

On the second day, participants from different countries chose to attend one of five parallel thematic sessions where they shared their experiences about key issues for waste pickers such as organising, privatisation/technological change and public policies. The third day focused on networking and the way forward. It started with a presentation on a local network of cooperatives in Sao Paulo, Brazil (Catasampa) followed by a global network example, StreetNet International. Both provided useful ideas about the difficulties and advantages of linking up organisations into networks. Afterwards participants worked in regional groups. During this time Latin American waste pickers held their Third Conference. They expanded the number of member countries in the Network from five to eleven, based on a commitment to a regional action plan. A representative from each of the countries was elected. They also chose a new secretariat, which is now based at the Brazilian National Movement of Waste Pickers.

The Conference adopted a global Declaration, jointly prepared by representatives from each continent. The Declaration promotes the social and financial inclusion of waste-pickers in solid waste management systems; it rejects incineration and burial-based processing technologies and defends systems that support the popular economy; it commits to maintain contact among waste-pickers from around the world and proposes reviewing laws and public policies with waste pickers being included in decision making.

Day Four was one of real live experiences. Participants visited local cooperatives to see successful organisation in action. They also had an opportunity to visit the Bogota Association of Waste Pickers or the National Association of Waste Pickers to learn about their struggles and how their organisations work.

The Conference was serious but also filled with fun and entertainment. Colombian cultural groups provided musical interludes and participants frequently broke into song. The song of the Brazilian Catadores Movement became the most popular song of the Conference. There was also a great photo exhibition showing waste pickers from different countries and featuring their history.

For waste pickers, the Conference represented a big step forward in their struggle for

recognition, rights and dignity. It consolidated the organisation of waste pickers across Latin America and united them around a common action programme. It built strong links across continents and provided the basis for ongoing exchanges and networking. It also facilitated learning and sharing of experiences by waste pickers from different countries, and between waste pickers and other players. Their situation was highlighted and gathered support from a wide audience of different stakeholders. It showed that waste pickers are capable, organised, responsible and not a "bunch of thieves" as they are so often described.

What is the way forward? Noting that the level of organisation in different countries is very uneven, and often almost non-existent, the time is not yet right to set up a formal global network of waste pickers. The priority task is to build and strengthen base organisations and national and regional networks, and to maintain links and regular communication across the world. The International Conference Steering Committee will be initially the vehicle to maintain contact and to develop a programme to which waste picker organisations and their allies will contribute.

Visit the web site, [www.recicladores.net](http://www.recicladores.net) for reports and presentations. See photographs and listen to the song of the Catadores Movement.

Go out and find out about waste pickers and waste picker organisations in your cities. Write to us about what you have found. We would like to be in touch with as many organisations as possible to help build an international movement of waste pickers.

## **Southern Africa: Demand for regional trade protocols to include informal economy**

The LEDRIZ/ANSA Regional Informal Economy Workshop was held at Kopanong Hotel and Conference Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa, 4-5 February 2008. The main objectives of the workshop were to firstly share knowledge and experiences on the challenges being faced by the informal economy workers in the different Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries. Secondly participants critically analysed and discussed the SADC Trade Protocol, the SADC Protocol on the Facilitation of the Movement of People as well as Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) and what it holds for the Informal Economy.

Comrade Moyo, Deputy General Secretary of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), on behalf of the Southern African Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC) President who could not be present, opened the workshop.

Moyo said that the informal economy, contrary to predictions, had withstood the test of time and in the past few decades had become the leading employer and also an important contributor to GDP for SADC economies. This was explained as a result of the failures of neo-liberal policies which caused a serious loss of formal jobs in many countries.

In the first presentation Dr. G. Kanyenze, LEDRIZ Director, explained the ANSA

Concept and Economic Framework and Macro-Economic/Finance Policy thrust. The development strategy preferred by the ANSA Initiative is a bottom-up worldview in finding and developing alternatives to neo-liberalism. In discussion of the word development the participants listed the right to food security, health, education, housing, basic utilities, transport, decent work, living wage.

He noted that the economic growth that has been seen is negative as it tends to have no long-term benefits nor to redistribute resources to the poor. He noted that before and after independence, the SADC governments concentrated mainly on improving the formal economy whilst neglecting the non-formal economies. This has led to "dual or enclave economies". He noted that while the formal economy is male dominated, the urban informal and the communal economies are both dominated by women, the latter often being ignored.

The ANSA Initiative is a call to mobilise people to engage the governments on issues which are critical in achieving human-centred development. Dr Kanyenze said that the starting point is for the trade unions to mobilise and organise the informal economy workers into organised structures where they can begin to learn about their politico-socio-economic rights and demand them.

In the second session, the current trends in the Informal Economy in the SADC countries, was facilitated by Ms. N. Chakanya, LEDRIZ. Ms Chakanya gave a background to the informal economy according to the ILO perspective, highlighting that more than 30 years ago, ILO first used the term "informal sector" to refer to "activities of the working poor who are working very hard but who were not recognised, recorded, protected or regulated by public authorities". She went onto emphasise the size of the informal sector. In Africa, informal work is estimated to account for almost 80% of non-agricultural employment, 60% of urban employment and over 90% of new jobs.

Participants were asked to list what they identified as the biggest problems faced by informal economy workers in their countries. In the next session the strengths, weakness and threats to informal economy organisations in the countries represented, Malawi, Zambia, Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa was made.

On the second day the workshop spent discussing the three SADC protocols. Aulline Mabika, Southern and Eastern Africa Trade Information and Negotiations Institute (SEATINI) guided the workshop in evaluating the trade environment within SADC countries and the extent to which it stifles or promotes full participation of the informal economy in regional integration. She explained that poverty reduction was not an explicit objective of the trade protocol. It is expected to be achieved, unrealistically, from the effects arising from regional trade expansion. She went through the opportunities and the risks for the informal economy.

The SADC Protocol on the Facilitation of the Movement of People pertains to the free movement of "natural persons" and to the dismantling of barriers such as visa requirements, requiring governments to issue travel documents and to remove restrictions to the movement of human beings across national borders. State parties

have agreed to harmonise current immigration practices, however, much confusion exists across the SADC countries on these.

Mabika noted that the realisation by SADC governments of the need to ease the movement of people among SADC countries should be a starting point for lobbying the governments. The advantages of these policy initiatives should not be confined to large formal sector companies. The business of small entrepreneurs involved in cross-border trade should also be facilitated as a means to encouraging the development of the informal economy in the Southern Africa region, as well as regional trade and integration, poverty alleviation and the economic empowerment of women. She said that obstacles that are placed in the way of informal traders' movement are also obstacles to trade.

The next presentation on EPAs and the Informal Economy was facilitated by Ms Chakanya, from LEDRIZ. She started by explaining that one of the largest trading agreements between Europe and the African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, the Cotonou Agreement, came to an end on the 31st of December 2007. The EPAs are supposed to succeed this with supposed effect from January 2008. However, the process has been largely dominated by the EU. ACP countries' developmental needs are in danger of being overlooked. The regional trade union organisation, the Southern Africa Trade Union Coordinating Council (SATUCC) sees the developments pertaining to the negotiations having negative implications on domestic production, local businesses, workers and national development as a whole. The EPAs call for lifting of trade tariffs and reciprocity in markets. Reciprocity means that the ACP countries will be required to progressively open their markets to the EU's products and services. The implication is that this will destroy the industrial, services and agricultural sectors due to influx of cheap imports.

In light of the above, she concluded her presentation by stating that the challenge confronting the informal economy in SADC is to make the transition from mere survival (subsistence) to an economically stronger position.

In the next session groups broke up to do group work. The questions were posed:

- o "What benefits can be drawn from the SADC Protocols discussed - and how can players in the informal economy benefit more from them? What needs to be done?;

- o "What are the negative aspects of the SADC protocols to the informal economy? Or how do they disadvantage the informal sector players? How can these disadvantages be mitigated? What needs to be done, to reduce or eradicate these disadvantages?"

A group of six people were identified from the participants, to produce a draft declaration or communiqué drawing upon the issues raised from the group presentations. The draft was presented to the rest of the participants and all necessary corrections were made. Participants were given a copy of the declaration and they were tasked with taking it to their organisations and other interested parties within the informal economy in their respective countries.

## **DECLARATION OF THE INFORMAL ECONOMY ASSOCIATIONS/ ORGANISATIONS AND TRADE UNIONS IN THE SADC REGION**

Demands:

- Governments must recognise and support the informal economy through supportive legislation and national policies;
- Governments must engage the informal economy workers in policy formulation and decision making. "Nothing for us without us!"
- The informal economy be legally recognised through legislation to the effect that by-laws become user friendly;
- The national Governments must move away from the neo-liberal policies such as trade liberalisation perpetuated by the developed countries, which displaces informal economy workers through huge influx of cheap products. For example, the neo-liberal policies proposed under EPAs;
- The SADC Protocols be simplified and disseminated to the ordinary citizens by all the SADC Member States;
- Governments must fulfill their obligations as enshrined in the SADC Protocol on Trade and the Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons enabling the free movement of goods and services and people at national borders through removal of visas and tariffs within the SADC region; and,
- Organisations such as SATUCC and StreetNet must establish a regional structure for the informal economy that can engage SADC in dialogue for the betterment of the welfare of the informal economy workers.

Source: LEDRIZ / ANSA Regional Informal Economy Workshop.

### **StreetNet Statement on Xenophobic Attacks in South Africa**

StreetNet International, the international federation of street vendor organisations with over 300 000 members in 34 organisations in 30 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America:

Joins COSATU, SACC, TAC, Social Movements Indaba, Abahlali Basemjondolo and other mass-based organisations of South Africans who have rallied their members against the brutal attacks against non-South African people residing in South Africa (as well as other victims of the accompanying wave of looting and destruction of the homes of poor people).

Notes that refugees fleeing from conflicts in other African countries, and particularly our neighbour Zimbabwe, migrant workers/undocumented workers and people working in the informal economy as cross border traders in SADC countries, on the streets and in markets are the most vulnerable to xenophobia and discrimination.

Notes with extreme concern:

- the horrific and senseless attacks on defenceless families and workers in different parts of South Africa resulting in tragic loss of life, injury, homelessness, fear and wanton destruction of the property of the urban poor;
- the xenophobic attacks are repugnant to all those who cherish and respect the rights of workers both in their places of work and in the community;
- the dangers of xenophobia spreading to markets and pavements where informal economy workers from SADC countries (including South Africans) and the rest of Africa are earning a living - being cross border traders and those who are resident in South Africa's towns and cities;
- the erosion of the rights of all workers regardless of nationality, religion, language, race and gender to earn a living without fear.

Calls on government, local and national, as well as the private sector and members of the public to:

- respect and understand the United Nations Convention on Refugees and to prevent any form of discrimination against refugees who have the legal right to earn a living;
- to ensure that xenophobia is controlled through public education programmes for the police, courts and citizens to respect the rights of all who live in the country to earn their livelihoods;
- introduce and monitor laws to regulate and allow free movement between SADC countries that will create opportunities for informal traders that will help to reduce the poverty and unemployment that is alleged to be one of the causes of xenophobic prejudice and the unacceptable use of violence that we have witnessed.

StreetNet is supporting the efforts of street vendors' organisations in Durban to strengthen the initiatives of other mass-based organisations by calling a general meeting of street vendors to mobilise peaceful popular resistance against these xenophobic attacks and all forms of violence against poor people living in South Africa.

Let us honour the Freedom Charter, which says "South Africa belongs to all those who live in it".

**Issued by Pat Horn  
International Co-ordinator  
StreetNet International**

### **SIVARA wins battle for recognition of street vendors** **By Oscar Roberto Silva, SIVARA, Argentina**

The Street Vendors Union of Argentinean Republic (SIVARA), was founded on the 13 December 1973. Its objective was to unite all the street vending sectors, hawkers (mobile vendors) and/or with fixed stalls, for the development of their activities on the public thoroughfares and/or in the public or private sphere. The vendors include

coffee merchants, women cosmetics vendors, vendors of crockery, sweets, clothing, vendors at sports stadiums, on trains, vendors during special events, etc.

The founding of SIVARA resulted from grave persecution that we suffered at the hands of the Municipal and Police Authorities who detained us for working and we were incarcerated for up to 30 days in prison. For this reason the following are some of SIVARA's main objectives.

- 1) Achieve recognition that Street Vendors are workers and that it is a profession. This point was achieved as the Ministry of Labour recognised and granted legal trade union Status to SIVARA in terms of which the police may not detain us in prison as they did in other times.
- 2) To struggle for freedom to work throughout the length and breadth of our country. At this time we are far advanced in achieving this objective by means of ordinances, provincial and national laws. To date, we have 70% protected by these legal instruments.
- 3) Another objective was to obtain health protection for vendors and their families. We now have Social Welfare protection and members obtain affordable health care.

At the moment SIVARA is working in the national parliament for the approval of a national law to protect vendors and in the city of Buenos Aires for a new ordinance for the protection of cheap goods vendors on public thoroughfares, in fairs in parks and squares in our city. We are also discussing the implementation of a law to protect newspaper vendors, vendors in the railway environment and in sports stadiums.

These are some of the achievements obtained, but our greatest achievement is that the Authorities now respect our members as workers, with labour and social rights, who can retire with dignity. SIVARA has 17 205 active members.

SIVARA joined StreetNet International as a new affiliate this year.