



StreetNet News

No 20 November, 2010

Getting to know StreetNet's new President

Oscar Silva, General Secretary of the Street Vendors Trade Union of the Republic of Argentina (SIVARA) was elected StreetNet President at the 3rd Congress in Benin in August 2010

When did you become a street vendor and an active union member? I started street trading when I was 19 years-old after I decided my career as a film star was not going very far! I was put in prison on a number of occasions for trading on the streets.

There I met other street traders and we started discussing what we could do.

Ramon Salvador Montiel motivated us all, saying that we were workers and should not be treated as criminals. So we decided to found SIVARA and I became the first General Secretary of the youth section. I am the father of six children and one of them is a vendor as well and has been elected Secretary for Social Action, responsible for providing medical assistance to members.

What are the main demands of SIVARA?

SIVARA was closed down by the military dictatorship and it was a difficult time and there was much persecution. Many traders were imprisoned. In 1983 we managed to re-establish SIVARA and we organised a massive struggle to get the law which classified street traders as "vagabonds and persons who lived badly" repealed. We had to pay off institutional debts which had accumulated under the dictatorship, in order to become a respected and viable

organisation. Since 1983 I have been elected General Secretary seven times by the direct votes of the affiliates. Our main demands are to achieve dignified working conditions and social conditions for street vendors throughout the country.

Why did you stand as a candidate for StreetNet President and what do you hope to achieve for StreetNet?

I stood for election at the request of other affiliates and was honoured to accept as I think StreetNet is the ideal instrument to achieve

the demands of street vendors throughout the world. StreetNet needs to achieve greater visibility about its work, so that vendors' organisations can know about and participate in its struggles and feel part of StreetNet and decide to affiliate.

I am a great believer in the StreetNet slogan: "Nothing for us without us". StreetNet needs to participate in discussions on legislative proposals which can improve the protection and rights of vendors. It must also assist affiliates to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

One of my own personal goals is to ensure that the regional leaders receive extensive training so they are well informed and can represent the interests of the sector and establish forums for social dialogue with government authorities. In that way StreetNet's reputation with governments will be enhanced. And StreetNet must always work to end discrimination and denounce acts of injustice



Oscar Silva was elected president of StreetNet

Photo: StreetNet

against street traders, including children, women, and the elderly.

What changes would you like to see in StreetNet's communications? I think the quality of the printing of the StreetNet bulletin should be improved and it should be in colour so it is more attractive and interesting for the reader. The bulletin should have information about vendors' organisations from all the continents; information about best practice on social dialogue and the participation of StreetNet in international events. The StreetNet website needs

to become more dynamic so that it can become a site which is constantly consulted by vendors' organisations, academics, journalists and government officials.

What else would you like to add for the StreetNet bulletin readers? I hope that we can all participate actively in the work of StreetNet so that we have the necessary strength to achieve legal and social recognition and to end the situation of poverty, marginalisation and lack of social protection.



StreetNet International delegates to the International congress participate in the Congress Commissions
Photo: StreetNet

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StreetNet Congress elects new team

StreetNet International held its Third Congress from 10th – 12th August 2010 in Cotonou, Benin. Seventy eight delegates from 33 of the 35 affiliates mainly in Africa, Asia and Latin America, representing a paid-up membership of 353 988, assembled for three days to chart the way forward in the continuing effort to strengthen the organisation as part of the international movement of informal economy workers.

The Electoral Commission was made up of a group of impartial, respected and experienced trade union leaders: Kamissa Dembele, Zakari Ibrahima and Zingam Ali Hounou.

After an exhaustive election process, the new International Council comprising 15 people was elected on 11th August 2010. Nine of its members are women.

The International Council is comprised of:

President: Oscar Silva, SIVARA, Argentina

Vice-President: Anastasie Maswamba, LDFC, Democratic Republic of Congo

Secretary: Shikha Joshi, NASVI/SEWA, India

Treasurer: Beauty Mugijima, ZCIEA, Zimbabwe

The 11 additional members (6 women) are as follows:

Juliana Brown Afari: StreetNet Ghana Alliance

Elvis Chisala Nkandu Lusaka: AZIEA, Zambia

Fandy Clarisse Gnahoui: USYNVEPID, Benin

Mamadou Fall: SUDEMS, Senegal

Sandra Yanes Florez Jimenez: CTCP, Nicaragua

Madeleine Tounkara: CNTG, Guinea

Fundile Jalile: ECSVA, South Africa

Fatoumata Bintou: CNTS, Senegal

Narayan Prasad Neupane: NEST, Nepal

Dorothy Kenneth: KENASVIT, Kenya

Souley Zeinabou: FENASEIN, Niger



The newly elected members of the StreetNet International Council at StreetNet Congress held in Cotonou Benin from 10th-12th of August, 2010 Photo: StreetNet

“Moving into a Higher Gear”: Key Points from the International Coordinator’s Report

Pat Horn delivered a key note speech to the Congress outlining her views of the strengths and challenges facing StreetNet at the crossroads:

Strengths:

- StreetNet continues to grow and has established regional focal points;
- The organising and campaigns work has been strengthened;
- The World Class Cities for All Campaign in South Africa and India are being implemented and the New Manifesto Campaign is about to start;
- StreetNet’s international recognition continues to grow, at the World Social Forum, in Women in Informal Employment: Globalising and Organising (WIEGO) and at the International Labour Organisation (ILO);
- StreetNet has the capacity to expand into Eastern Europe and the Caribbean and to tackle the new issues of young workers, and workers with disabilities.

Challenges:

- StreetNet needs to achieve a more visible impact on urban policies and development planning;



StreetNet International Coordinator, Pat Horn

Photo: StreetNet

- StreetNet’s work on the practical implementation of labour standards needs to be strengthened;
- StreetNet needs to address the issue of class imbalance in leadership and take a frank look at leadership practices;
- StreetNet needs to find ways to internalise and consolidate a struggle around morality and ethics.

Congress Commissions

1. Climate Change, its effects on workers in the informal economy, and the contribution of the informal waste recycling sector to help solve the conditions created by climate change;
2. Inclusive cities and inclusion of informal economy workers in urban policy development and participatory budgeting;
3. Globalisation and its impact on workers in the informal economy;
4. World Trade and its effects for workers in the informal economy;
5. Class and employment relations in informal economy workplaces;
6. StreetNet’s international campaigns, including a campaign for a new Street Vendors’ Manifesto, and the World Class Cities for All Campaign which was conducted in South Africa leading up to the 2010 FIFA World Cup and the campaign in India around the Commonwealth Games in Delhi in October 2010.

Congress Resolutions

The Congress passed the following resolutions:

1. Establishment of a Constitutional Reform Commission to consider how to enhance the organisation’s internal democracy, promoting the participation of young workers in StreetNet’s decision-making structures and developing provisions to allow for regional balance;
2. Establishment of a fund-raising sub-committee to review a range of ideas to help StreetNet become financially sustainable, including a proposal to set up a foundation to manage revenue generating schemes;
3. The Social Solidarity Economy Resolution is a new look at doing business with the aim of promoting social cohesion, economic stability and sustainable development (see page 4).

StreetNet Congress Resolution on the Social Solidarity Economy The main points

In most developing countries, the numbers of informal economy workers is increasing as a result of the global neo-liberal policies imposed over decades. Between 30%-70% of the workforce is now working informally in micro- and small-enterprises, mostly of a family nature, to the extent that it is now recognised as a new economic phenomenon, called the social solidarity economy.

The social solidarity economy is governed by principles and values of social responsibility, entrepreneurship and solidarity, vital to the development of economic citizenship and democracy. These principles and values are consistent with the objectives of decent work, gender equality and equal opportunities for vulnerable groups.

The StreetNet Congress resolves to:

(1) Promote the concept of the social solidarity

economy as a different approach to doing business which aims not only to achieve financial returns but also to benefit society as a whole.

(2) Lobby so that States pass legislation and adopt policies to promote the social solidarity economy, in particular through access to credit, tax benefits, and technical assistance programmes.

(3) Promote the adoption of State programmes to support members of the social solidarity economy and to strengthen the role of local communities; and thus to promote local competitiveness and capacity for innovation.

(4) To develop both research and practical programmes to promote new models based on the social solidarity economy and to develop instruments to qualitatively and quantitatively measure its impact on overall growth.

International Labour Organisation (ILO) Training Course on the Social Solidarity Economy



A delegation of StreetNet representatives led by StreetNet Campaign Co-ordinator, Nora Wintour (middle), from Bangladesh (Farida Khanom) and Nicaragua (Manuel Reyes) attended a course on the Social Solidarity Economy at the ILO Training Centre in Turin from 25th-29th October, where they presented StreetNet's new policy on the Social Solidarity Economy, adopted at the Congress (see above) Photo: StreetNet

UPTA, Spain: StreetNet's first affiliate in Europe!

StreetNet is delighted to welcome the Union of Professional and Autonomous Workers (UPTA) as a new member, its first affiliate in Europe! UPTA is a national organisation with members who are self-employed, or autonomous workers as they are called in Spain. UPTA was founded 10 years ago as previously there was no national organisation that could represent the interests of the growing number of self-employed.

Youth the majority among the self-employed

In Spain there are more than 3 million self-employed workers and about 10% of these are affiliated to UPTA. About 35% of the UPTA affiliates are women. A large proportion of the self-employed are young people and UPTA has been able to obtain a system of bonus points in the social security system to facilitate their entry and other benefits.

The autonomous workers include street and market traders, construction, hotel and transport workers and, to a lesser degree, the liberal professions. UPTA has been a major actor in the transformation of informal workers into self-employed workers through the adoption of a new Statute for Autonomous Work, which is the law which determines the rights and obligations of the workers.

The Statute was passed in 2007 and provides professional security, the right of association, social rights, occupational health and safety preventative measures, access to health services as well as obligations in terms of income tax. As a result of the work of UPTA, the situation of informal workers has become part of the political agenda of the country. UPTA is now fully integrated into the trade union movement of the country and recognised by the employers' federations.

Assistance offered to migrant workers

UPTA also provides services such as training and advice on issues ranging from professional issues, tax and accountancy, legal issues, assistance to migrant workers, the majority of whom are from Latin America and the European Union, and special programmes on gender and young workers. UPTA also offers support to members with drawing up business plans, feasibility studies and access

to bank loans through government initiatives or the Provincial Savings Banks.

Sharing knowledge important

“One of the reasons for affiliation to StreetNet is that we realise we have a relatively privileged position compared to many other countries and we wish to share our ‘know how’ and experiences with other organisations around the world”, explained Cesar Garcia, Secretary for Sectoral Policy, UPTA.

If you have questions or would like to know more about the work of UPTA, please contact Cesar Garcia, Secretary for Sectoral Policy, UPTA Spain at dptsectorial@upta.esce:



Secretary for Sectoral Policy of UPTA, Spain

Photo: UPTA

African meeting of waste collectors and recycling workers

A successful one-week seminar has been held in Saly, Senegal, from 20th – 25th September, with African affiliates of StreetNet who have been assisting informal waste collectors and recycling workers to organise collectively.

Representatives of organised waste collectors' movements in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and India also attended and exchanged experiences.

This was a successful experiment in active solidarity between the two sectors of street vendors and waste collectors, and a joint programme of events was identified for the World Social Forum in Dakar in February 2011.

World Class Cities for All Campaign and the Commonwealth Games

Too busy clearing the streets of vendors to finalise the Commonwealth Games infrastructure

On the occasion of the opening of the Commonwealth Games, on October 3rd, Arbind Singh, the national coordinator of the National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) stated:

“The Commonwealth Games have been the cause of an intensified attack against street vendors, with evictions and harassment of vendors, street beggars and slum dwellers in the centre of New Delhi and near the sports grounds. The Government of India has tried to pretend that poor people do not exist in New Delhi. There are at least 350 000 street vendors in New Delhi. How can you clear them off the streets? What is the rationale in trying to pretend that the city is entirely composed of the rich and middle-class.”

The Government of India adopted a National Urban Vending Policy in 2009 which is a progressive policy providing for the regulation and licensing of street vendors and the establishment of town vending committees. The legislation also foresees provision for social security schemes for street vendors. In New Delhi, this law has already been enacted into state law. However, despite the existence of this vending law, many markets and trading sites have been forcibly closed. In June 2010, the Municipal Commissioner issued a blanket warning, claiming that all vendors would be evicted prior to the start of the Games.

NASVI wrote to the Government and Commonwealth Secretariat on 16th June 2010, expressing concern for the situation of street vendors and calling upon the Commonwealth Games organisers and the Government of India to use the existing legislation to establish vending committees and develop policy solutions prior to the Games. Ela Bhatt, founder of the world-renowned Self-Employed

World Class Cities for All Campaign in Brazil

The Campaign is now getting underway in Brazil and there are on-going discussions with the CUT Brazil and Women in Informal Employment: Globalising and Organising (WIEGO) on an initial research and organising programme in some of the 12 host cities.



Women's Association (SEWA) and a member of the Elders Foundation, also wrote to the Prime Minister of India, Shri Manmohan Singh, on 7th August 2010, condemning the evictions and requesting that the vendors be integrated into the planning for the Games.

“During the South Africa World Cup, street vendors clearly lost out as they were excluded and evicted from trading sites. The same approach is being taken in New Delhi. Let's hope that when the World Cup arrives in Brazil, the urban poor do not also live in fear for their livelihoods but finally have something to celebrate!”, Pat Horn, StreetNet International's Coordinator, concluded.



Street vendors in Delhi demand an end to anti-vending policies

Photo: StreetNet

ASSOVACO organising Women Head Porters of South Kivu

Magorwa is a cross-border porter based in Uvira, South Kivu, in the Democratic Republic of Congo. She is called a “mbakazi”, a porter without capital to buy her own goods. Mbakazi means “give me a job”. In fact the porters are working for the traders but without a salary. Magorwa’s job is to carry goods belonging to richer informal traders across the border to Bujumbura, the capital of Burundi, which is 30 kilometres away.

In the morning, Magorwa takes her load over the frontier, risking harassment from the border police and others who sometimes make her pay a bribe. She delivers it to an informal trader in Burundi, who only pays for the goods received. Anything lost on the route is considered her responsibility. When there are many police roadblocks in Burundi, after crossing the border, she divides her load into three or more smaller

bundles and she pays other porters to carry them so as to spread the risk. On bad days, the police in Burundi confiscate all her goods and she must return home with nothing, although she still has to pay the supplier. She is 53 years old and is a single mother with eight children. She works up to 18 hours per day. Her load can weigh up to 20 kilos. Most days, she earns around USD 5. She started work as a porter four years ago when her husband left to look for work in South Africa. She has had no news of him since then.

Organising for better conditions

Magorwa is a member of the Organisation of Women without Means (OFES), which is an affiliate of ASSOVACO, StreetNet’s affiliate in Kivu. OFES and ASSOVACO are organising women porters in order to negotiate better terms and conditions of work with the informal traders and to denounce harassment and corruption from the authorities. OFES has also helped to set up micro-

In Bukavu, capital of South Kivu, the head porters

take goods across the Ruzizi River to Cyangugu in Rwanda. The informal traders in both towns sub-contract women to transport the goods. They are credit cooperatives, which are solidarity funds to which each member agrees to pay a certain amount at a certain time and when there are sufficient funds, they give out loans at low interest rates, called “musimamo”. One trader might sub-contract up to 50 women so as to avoid paying customs taxes at the frontier. There is fierce competition for these jobs, even though the returns are minimal and the risks high. Jacqueline Kasunzu, President of ASSOVACO, visited the area on 11th August to discuss the many problems the women face.



Head loaders in Kivu gather to organise to stop the corruption of border officials and for their economic rights Photo: ASSOVACO

On the occasion of Decent Work Day, October 7th, StreetNet International issued a media release and used the example of the South Kivu porters as one of the challenges facing informal economy workers. “Organising informal cross border traders and porters so they can have voice and representation is a major priority”, StreetNet Coordinator

Pat Horn explained. “We need to understand the sub-contracting chain and the economic interdependence between formal economy and informal economy workers. Decent work for informal economy workers, the great majority of whom are women, is vital for sustainable development”, she added.

StreetNet-SATUCC five-year programme evaluation

In mid-October 2010, the Southern African Trade Union Co-ordinating Committee (SATUCC) is hosting a mid-term evaluation of a five-year StreetNet-SATUCC programme on organisation of workers in the informal economy in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in Gaborone, Botswana. StreetNet and SATUCC affiliates from the SADC region, StreetNet affiliates in East Africa and representatives of the Ghana TUC and the Nigeria Labour Congress will be attending.

Ghana StreetNet Alliance Leadership Training, 19th-26th September 2010

By Sibailly Douhoure, Organiser for Asia, West and Central Africa

The Ghana StreetNet Alliance is an alliance of five traders' organisations from Accra (Makola Market, Kantamanto, Ga-East) and the market of Takoradi. The Coordination Committee is composed of three members, including Juliana Afari-Brown who is a member of the StreetNet International Council. My visit to Ghana started with a meeting with the StreetNet Ghana Alliance. This was followed by a meeting with the General Secretary of the Ghana Trade Union Congress (TUC) Koffi Assamoah, who explained the work of the Informal Economy Department.

Meetings with market workers in Accra

From 22nd-25th September, a series of meetings were held with workers from the three markets of Accra. The main issues raised by the members on the work conditions included the lack of trading spaces, lack of credit, lack of storage facilities in the markets, no social security coverage and the long distances between work and home. On organisation they raised the problems of insufficient recruitment campaigns for new members, the lack of a physical office for the Alliance coordination, a

need for training programmes for members and information about StreetNet International activities.

On the 23rd and 24th September, a leadership training course was held at the Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS) in Accra. There were 26 participants, including 19 women. There were some participants from the Ghana national organisation of Tomato Traders as well.

Discussions focussed on confidence training, networking, lobbying, negotiating with local authorities, media work and public speaking. Women who had participated in a similar course in 2009 explained how the training had helped them to become more confident about speaking in public and how to discuss issues with government authorities without fear.

On 22nd September, a meeting was held with Dorcas Ansa of the Ghana Research and Advocacy Programme, an organisation that has collaborated with Women in Informal Employment: Globalising and Organising (WIEGO), who expressed willingness to assist with any StreetNet programmes in Ghana. There were also meetings with Dr Esther Ofei-Oboagyé, the ILGS director who also expressed willingness to continue to collaborate with StreetNet and the Ghana StreetNet Alliance, on issues such as negotiations and women's leadership. Dr Ofei-Oboagyé is also responsible for the Gender Equality Committee in Ghana.



Members of the StreetNet Ghana Alliance at the Leadership Training Workshop on 23rd and 24th September, 2010
Photo: StreetNet

Victory on the streets in New York

By Ali Issa, Street Vendor Project - Urban Justice

Among my many tasks as an organiser for the StreetNet affiliate, Street Vendor Project - Urban Justice in New York City, there are few more satisfying than helping vendors take back public space. This is necessary when the police, building owners or other authorities force vendors to move from the already limited spots on New York City's public sidewalks. Sometimes they drown vendors with tickets, or threaten them with arrest to get them to move. At other times private security groups harass vendors at the behest of business owners or anti-vendor residents.

Our strategy in this type of case can best be summarised as "confront and expose". First, we confirm that the spot is legal and that the vendor is following all the relevant regulations (table size/distance from pedestrian crossing etc.) Then we call on some of our vendor leaders to join us in visiting the site of the conflict. Most of the time the vendor has already made his/her case to the police or owners but has been ignored. We try to film and audio record an example of these exchanges to be used later. The next step is to see whether the authorities will act the same way when several vendors are standing in support of the one being forced out. This we also secretly record (sometimes by pretending to be tourists or hiding behind a tree!)

Finally, if all that fails, the Street Vendor Project staff spring out with our cameras and lawyers and display our full capacity. This is often a big surprise to whoever is pushing the vendor around, and is successful more often than not. When conflicts have continued at a particular location we have used video and audio to embarrass a police precinct or officer to get them to back down, such as this video shot in Flatbush, Brooklyn in 2009:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Se1zJ_IgA1g&feature=player_embedded.

Our most recent victory of this kind occurred on the Upper East Side of Manhattan where many wealthy New Yorkers reside. Over the winter of 2009-2010 a building in this area installed large plant pots where a fruit vendor had been working for five years, hoping to get him away from the area. The vendor, Mijandur Rahman, originally from Bangladesh, was a member of the Street Vendor Project, and when he described to us his problem and his desire to fight back, we sprang into action.

In this case we found out that the building had not applied for the proper permits for the plant pots.

We decided then, to move the plant pots ourselves, and waited to confront the police after the building called them.

We informed security of our plan, shoved and heaved the pots three feet to the side, allowing Mr Rahman to set up his fruit stand where he always had been. Sure enough the police arrived a few minutes later.

The police took about 20 minutes to investigate, and while that was going on passers-by immediately started buying fruit. They loved that guy! In the end, when the building could not show the plant pots were legal the police left, leaving Mr Rahman to work at his reclaimed spot. Victory!



StreetVendor Project members moving the plant pots in question so that fruit vendor Mijandur Rahman could continue trading
Photo: SVP



Street Vendor Projects members at Mijandur Rahman's reclaimed stall
Photo: SVP

While direct action such as this is something an organiser lives for, we understand a big part of the reason why there is this struggle over space to begin with, is that businesses have lobbied to make vending off limits in large areas of the city. As we attempt to take on those larger, structural issues through political mobilisation, we will continue to wage these small battles, one sidewalk at a time.

East Africa Field Visit, 13th to 26th October, 2010

By **Monica Garzaro Scott, StreetNet Organiser for
Southern and East Africa and Latin America**

During my East Africa field visit to StreetNet's affiliates KENASVIT in Kenya, TUICO in Tanzania and NUIEWO in Uganda, I had the opportunity to listen to different opinions from street and market traders' organisations, some local authorities and some partners working with issues of the informal economy sector.

I first visited KENASVIT, which prepared a very tight programme during my visit. I travelled to Nakuru where their international office is based and learnt of all the hard effort they have put into strengthening their work and negotiations with local authorities. They have achieved a great regional and national spread, although there are many challenges for organising in Nairobi. Although they do not yet have a formal link with the national trade union, COTU, they have managed good working relationships with many other organisations that are helping them with many issues such as internal democracy, HIV/AIDS, conflict resolution, collection of data about the vendors, etc. In Nakuru they have a good relationship with the municipality, but there is no established negotiating forum and they are trying to get a national forum where their needs can be heard and assistance obtained with their problems.

When visiting TUICO, Tanzania, I realised they are a strong trade union with branches around the country that include organisations of informal economy workers in their structures. TUICO has been helping street and market traders through capacity building and access to credit, but they consider that it is difficult to work with traders when they do not have permanent working places. Therefore, there are great numbers of street vendors that are not really being helped. The government does not have a good understanding of either the needs or the main problems the sector is facing and there is a much prejudice towards them.

In Uganda, with the President and General Secretary



General Secretary of KENASVIT, Simon Nasieku, at his stall
Photo: StreetNet

of NUIEWO, I visited many markets and businesses. I was glad to find out more about the HIV/AIDS clinics they have in many markets in Kampala where people are able to get tested and get access to medicine.

During this visit I got the impression that national and local authorities still think that the informal economy is a temporary phenomenon, although the informal economy is continuously increasing. It was also interesting to notice that, at the time of my visit, the UN, world leaders and civil society were meeting in New York to discuss the Millennium Development Goals for 2015 and the global fight against poverty and hunger. I wonder how it is possible that the leaders who while trying to reduce poverty have not mentioned (at least publicly during that week), anything in regard to the conditions of workers in the informal economy.

The vicious cycle of poverty will continue in this sector as long as street and market vendors are continually facing unprotected or unregulated labour conditions and lack of access to formal education, appropriate technology, good infrastructure in regard to transport, storage facilities, water, electricity, sanitation, etc. We need to reinforce the demand to local governments to establish negotiating forums where traders can contribute to their own solutions and put an end to the harassment and discrimination that they face.

New Manifesto Campaign—pilot phase begins

The New Manifesto Campaign is beginning to get into action following the initial meeting of the parallel commission at the 3rd StreetNet Congress in Benin. All the members of the commission have been contacted again and asked to take part in the initial testing phase of the New Manifesto survey.

It is planned to pilot the survey in four countries (two French-speaking and two English-speaking during October and November and to send out the revised survey to all StreetNet affiliates during December. Look out for more details on the StreetNet website! [Http: www//streetnet.org.za](http://streetnet.org.za)

Cuba passes new law on autonomous workers

As Cuba slashes the numbers of public sector workers, it is opening up new possibilities for self-employed workers and redefining economic production away from the state sector. On August 1st, a new system which legalises and taxes the self-employed was approved and will take effect from October. The Ministry of Labour and Social Security has approved 178 categories of self-employment, including food vendors, refuse recyclers, roadside stand or cart vendors of agricultural products. Next year the opening up of new retail categories is envisaged and reviewing prices for wholesale markets in certain products, including soap, shoe polish, dyes, ropes and similar items. The licences for small restaurants are to be extended and the sale of food products made from potatoes, seafood and beef permitted. The self-employed can now work from home or in rented premises.

Self-employed workers will be required to pay taxes on personal income and on sales and will need to make social security contributions, which will provide them with old age pensions, incapacity allowances and maternity protection. At the same time, there are discussions underway as to how to facilitate bank credits from the Central Bank of Cuba for self-employed persons.

As President Raul Castro told the National Assembly on August 1st, the “objective is to defend, maintain and continue improving socialism, not to destroy it”.

Source: Granma International, The newspaper of the Communist Party of Cuba

Staff at the StreetNet Secretariat

There have been two staff changes at the office. We are sorry to lose Lou Haysom who resigned as Web Manager at the end of July. Lou has worked with StreetNet International on a part-time basis since 2002 and she will be much missed by staff and affiliates. She has worked with Nora Wintour, the StreetNet Campaigns Coordinator on the November bulletin and may continue to work on different assignments in the future. We are recruiting for her replacement. Felicity Isaacs, the Financial Administrator, was taken seriously ill and she will be off work for an indeterminate period. We wish her a speedy recovery. Angelique Bryan has joined the team as a temporary financial administrator for three months.

NEWS BRIEFS

Organising Drive in Latin America: StreetNet President Oscar Silva and the Latin American focal point organisation, CTCP in Nicaragua, are working on a plan for the expansion of StreetNet in Latin America. There will be an initial organising meeting in Buenos Aires on 23rd November.

Peru: Elections for the Mayor of Lima: The Departmental Federation of Street Vendors of Lima (FEDEVAL) reports that street and market vendors' issues were high on the agenda of the political parties contesting the municipal elections on 3rd October. FEDEVAL General Secretary Manuel Sulca was put forward for the position of councillor in one of the party lists together with two other leaders from the trade union centre CUT Peru. While the CUT supported candidate Susana Villaran was the clear favourite for the post of Mayor, the right wing parties have filed thousands of complaints in order to prevent her being declared elected. The national electoral commission has not yet declared the results but either way, street vendors are clearly a political force to be reckoned with in Lima!

FUTRAND Venezuela denounces measures to limit informal trading:

FUTRAND Organising Secretary Vicente Carias, has written to StreetNet to explain that in many of the main cities of Venezuela (Caracas, Barcelona, Merida and Valencia) informal traders are being prevented from trading as a result of a new government decree which prevents trading for one or two days per week. Since mid-October, police and other local authorities have closed down stalls and confiscated goods in some towns. “Many traders are angry at this decree as it means that their earnings are substantially reduced”, Carlos Fuenmayor from FUTRAND stated.

FOTSSIEH Honduras joins Central American campaign to end the worst forms of

child labour: The Network of Informal Economy Self-employed Workers in Central America (RED-SEICAP) has started a campaign to end the worst forms of child labour (ILO Convention 182). In Honduras, the plan is to train 50 leaders about the rights of the child and to start a campaign, through the media, to create awareness about child labour and its negative consequences. This project is supported by the InterVida Foundation in Spain and the regional coordination is based in Nicaragua.

Annual evaluation questionnaire - have you completed your form?

StreetNet affiliates are also continuing to implement country activities and exchange visits, and during October and November they are asked to complete the annual evaluation questionnaire. At an end-of-year staff evaluation of 2010 and planning for 2011, staff will study the responses of the affiliates and look at their recommendations in the detailed planning and updating of the 2011 work plan.