



StreetNet Newsletter

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EDITORIAL: DELEGATES GATHER FOR 5TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS



5th International Congress delegates

StreetNet International held its Fifth International Congress from 4 – 6 October 2016 in Delhi, India. 109 delegates from 42 of our 49 registered affiliates in Africa, Asia, the Americas and Europe, representing a paid-up membership of over 600 000 assembled for three days to discuss the progress of our organisation and the international struggle to promote the organisation of street vendors, informal market vendors and hawkers as part of the international movement of workers in the informal economy.

Elections were held on the second day of the Congress, where a new International Council was elected, consisting of the following 8 woman and 7 men

President

**Lorraine Sibanda,
ZCIEA Zimbabwe**

Vice-President

**Alberto Santana,
FUTTEINCO Dominican
Republic**

Treasurer

**Shikha Joshi, SEWA
India**

Secretary

**Arbind Singh, NASVI
India**

Additional members:

1. Comfort Doryen – NAPETUL Liberia
2. Annie Diouf – CNTS Senegal
3. Jeannette Nyiramasengesho – SYTRIECI Rwanda
4. Gabriela Calandria – AFFE Uruguay
5. Nanci Godoy – SIVARA Argentina
6. Anne Matondo – LDFC Democratic Republic of Congo
7. Komi Kessouagni – FAINATRASIT Togo
8. Chet Sapkota – NEST Nepal
9. Lameck Kashiwa – AZIEA Zambia
10. Jamaladdin Ismayilov – Xhidmat-ISH Azerbaijan
11. Cesar Garcia – UPTA Spain

StreetNet International has thus secured its next democratic mandate until the Sixth StreetNet International Congress in 2019.

Way forward

In order to convene the Fifth International Congress, we had to scrape together bits and pieces of funding from every source imaginable, re-direct funds with the

consent of donors, rely on the goodwill of our partner WIEGO who contributed to many of the Congress costs in different ways, and learn how to do new fundraising methods such as crowd-funding. We are extremely grateful to all StreetNet's affiliates for their solidarity and personal sacrifices made by their Congress delegates, who contributed to covering the Congress expenses by not claiming the expenses and out-of-pocket allowances to which they are normally entitled in such international events.

Now that that is done, the next challenge we confront is to find funds for StreetNet's basic operations in 2017 and beyond. StreetNet received bad news that the FNV Mondial global programme for vulnerable workers, which used to fund the annual meetings of the StreetNet International Council and regional workshops, will not continue after the end of 2016. So our first priority is to find another funding source so that our newly-elected International Council can start to work – and because most of the members of the International Council are new, this also requires leadership training.

In India the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihoods and Regulation of Street Vending) Act was passed in 2014, in terms of which statutory Town Vending Committees have been established (although there is still reluctance in many cities to implement the

new law). Very few organisations in other countries have such statutory local-level negotiating forums, but there is still reluctance in many cities to implement the new law), but most have nevertheless engaged authorities in *ad hoc* negotiations of different kinds with different degrees of success. Many have initiated approaches to their authorities about the establishment (or reform) of local-level negotiating forums using StreetNet's 2013 Model Framework document guidelines.

We are hopeful that in early 2017 we will be able to convene an international negotiations skills training workshop, supported by WIEGO, for StreetNet affiliates who are not already involved in specific country projects on collective bargaining in the informal economy.

The International Congress made a decision to establish a Commission to look into the formation of a parallel regional Ibero-American organisation UTREIN in 2015, and the extent to which StreetNet funds were used for this purpose. The International Council will give attention to this as a matter of priority, but the convening of the Commission will also require funds to be secured.

A luta continua!

Pat Horn, StreetNet International Co-ordinator



5th StreetNet international Conference: 109 delegates from 42 of 49 registered affiliates in Africa, Asia, the Americas and Europe, representing a paid-up membership of over 600 000 assembled in Delhi, India

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Lorraine Sibanda, StreetNet International president

NEWLY ELECTED STREETNET PRESIDENT

LORRAINE SIBANDA SPEAKS ON ORGANISATIONAL PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT THREE YEARS

My successful activism, lobbying and advocacy work with ZCIEA as a woman leader, as well as the encouragement of the Eastern and Southern African Regions, pushed me to consider the position of StreetNet President. The confidence of ZCIEA and StreetNet affiliates from the Eastern and Southern African Region in my ability and competence as a tried and tested woman leader was expressed when they nominated, encouraged and supported me to contest the presidency.

During the next 3 years I will work closely with the other members of the Executive Committee, the International Council and the StreetNet team headed by the International Co-ordinator, to engage existing and prospective development partners to work in partnership with StreetNet on activities in all its five regions, including activities to promote decent work in the informal economy.

As StreetNet President, I view a complement of full-time staff for StreetNet as a priority, considering the vast geographical area and amount of work involved. Coming up with and implementing a Viability and Sustainability Plan for StreetNet is another pressing priority in the face of dwindling donor support. Third, achieving full youth representation at international level is also a big priority.

Currently, StreetNet faces funding challenges, the inability to finance fulltime staff, and has limited resources to convene upcoming Executive Committee and International Council meetings. Regarding

funding, I think StreetNet should continue to engage existing and prospective funding partners for support on innovative programmes in all the regions whilst working out a Viability and Sustainability Plan.

Regional focal points should also be encouraged and capacitated to fundraise and seek partnerships for activities in their respective regions, under the banner and guidance of StreetNet International. This should help raise funds to enable StreetNet staff to gradually move towards regular full-time work.

While there are limited resources to convene face-to-face meetings, StreetNet can use options such as Skype, email and teleconferences to communicate even as it continues to seek support for its usual meetings to take place. A stronger network can be built through constant exchange, learning and evaluative visits between affiliates in the different regional focal points of StreetNet. Continuing and sharing the work on the popularisation of the ILO Recommendation 204, will enable StreetNet to lead this process and be well-positioned to influence the betterment of the lives of informal economy workers worldwide, as well as command more recognition and respect from partners, other organisations and governments of the world. If an affiliate or region is facing a pressing challenge, all affiliates and all regions should speak out with one voice: this is one strategy which requires little funds. **NOTHING FOR US WITHOUT US!!**

“A stronger network can be built through constant exchange, learning and evaluative visits between affiliates in the different regional focal points of StreetNet.”

NEW VICE-PRESIDENT ALBERTO SANTANA SETS OUT HIS PRIORITIES FOR STREETNET

Alberto Santana, President of FUTTEINCO, StreetNet affiliate from the Dominican Republic, was elected as a StreetNet Vice-President during its Fifth International Congress in India. He had the following to say shortly after his election.

“First, we need to assist the Presidency and the entire International Council team, so that Streetnet is a stronger, more institutional and more public policy-relevant organisation for each of our affiliates. For this, StreetNet must support all affiliates more, so that they can increase their membership and level of training.

My priorities are to contribute to the Presidency with my knowledge and experience, through addressing StreetNet priorities, especially training and international co-operation. Strengthening StreetNet’s institutionality is very important for the new International Council, through having organisers in all our regions. Where there are already organisers, StreetNet must provide them with better tools to strengthen their work and give more support to organisations.

The challenges of StreetNet are basically to improve the quality of life of workers in our sector, through social protection, collective bargaining and fighting against abuse by authorities and other adverse sectors. To meet these challenges, we must strengthen our organisations and therefore, StreetNet, with a view to creating forces capable of influencing our position.

Global cooperation has been reduced. So, it is important to diversify the actions that have been used, while strengthening the alliances that have traditionally supported StreetNet. We must raise funds locally with the support of the StreetNet team and its affiliates. Something very important is to establish social solidarity economy projects within the local, regional and global frameworks, which can serve as support for the development projects of our affiliates, and in turn, build StreetNet resources. I believe that StreetNet needs to strengthen its fundraising efforts and provide greater education and training for its affiliates.

Once again, I would like to underline that it is necessary to strengthen the affiliated organisations as this will, in turn, strengthen StreetNet. Our organisation will thus have greater influence. To achieve this, we have to work hard on supporting regional organisers. In this way we will create a better network between all our organisations.

I dedicate myself to supporting the work of our StreetNet President, and will work for the unity and strengthening of StreetNet around the globe”.



Alberto Santana, President of FUTTEINCO, StreetNet Vice-President

“We have to work hard on supporting regional organisers. In this way we will create a better network between all our organisations.”

NEW STREETNET TREASURER - SHIKHA JOSHI - SPEAKS ON HER VISION AND FUNDRAISING FOR THE ORGANISATION

Shikha Joshi, one of the prominent leaders of the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) from India, was elected as a StreetNet Treasurer during the fifth StreetNet Congress in October 2016. Sister Shikha already has considerable international experience: she was elected as StreetNet's International Secretary at its third Congress in Cotonou, Benin in 2010 and served in this capacity for the next three years up to 2013. She had the following to say after her election as treasurer.

"I really see StreetNet becoming more visible in terms of street vendors' issues at global level. We need to strengthen affiliates for advocacy within their countries for them to be able to influence the rules and laws in favour of vendors.

My priorities are to minimise expenses and to try to find funders and supporters for StreetNet activities, who will give money to set up our core fund.

I consider fundraising and second line leadership relating to the position of the Coordinator, as the main challenges within StreetNet. I also believe that the elected leaders of StreetNet have to tackle these challenges, appoint an assistant Coordinator and build organisational capacity over the next three years.

Regarding fundraising, all the office-bearers and the International Co-ordinator, have to work as a team and find new donors and supporters who will commit to donating to our core fund. From my side, I will start searching for possible donors and will start a dialogue with them for StreetNet funding once they have been identified.

I will also talk to all International Council Members for their support in fundraising and donations to StreetNet.



Shikha Joshi, StreetNet International Treasurer, SEWA MP President

Most importantly, StreetNet needs to be focused on building the capacity of affiliates and regional focal points. It must also direct its work towards more visibility in international forums such as the International Trade Union Confederation, IUF, and the ILO."

"We need to strengthen affiliates for advocacy within their countries for them to be able to influence the rules and laws in favour of vendors."

Strengthening our internal organisational democracy

by Pat Horn, StreetNet International Co-ordinator



Pat Horn

StreetNet was launched on 14th November 2002, and has held 5 international congresses every three years in accordance with the StreetNet Constitution – in 2004 in Korea, 2007 in Brazil, 2010 in Benin, 2013 in Chile, and in 2016 in India. This is an important part of maintaining our organisational democracy. But does this mean that our work of strengthening our internal organisational democracy is done?

If we are listening to what StreetNet's affiliates are saying, the answer is NO. Since the Fifth StreetNet International Congress in Delhi, India, in October 2016, we have had many expressions of dissatisfaction about undemocratic practices that were observed in the Congress, despite the Congress being held in compliance with StreetNet's constitution, policies and established practices. Dissatisfaction has been expressed about the "slate" system (an electioneering tactic whereby certain participants pass around lists of who should be elected, during democratic elections), punitive electioneering behaviour on the part of some delegates, electioneering through spread of misinformation on the part of other delegates, and failure to uphold the principle and established StreetNet practice of equitable regional distribution of office-bearer positions in the International Council. It should be stressed that there is no official complaint demanding a nullification of the elections which took place at the Congress. However, any democratic organisation ignores such expressions of dissatisfaction at their peril. So we have resolved that we must listen to our members, create a safe and transparent space where they can express themselves without fear of victimisation, and we are asking for suggestions for ways of strengthening weaknesses in our internal democracy.

StreetNet's West and Central African Regional Focal Point convened a post-Congress teleconference, where a frank analysis of the congress was done, starting with a frank self-criticism of the lack of unity between delegates in their own region. They went on to critique the quality of French interpretation, and also the last-minute logistical organisation with regard to tickets and visa arrangements, and poor communications. For these inconveniences StreetNet coordination has taken full responsibility and apologised to the Regional Focal Point. The critique went on to mention observations about lack of democratic conduct by some participants – without going into detail.

In retrospect, we realised that we have not been sufficiently active in publicising the StreetNet Code of Conduct and advising our members how to defend their democratic rights using this Code of Conduct. So we are now rectifying this by circulating the Code of Conduct to all StreetNet affiliates and asking for feedback (which will be kept anonymous unless specified otherwise by the organisation concerned) with regard to the following questions:

1. Do you feel that the Code of Conduct was well observed during the Fifth StreetNet International Congress?
2. If not, can you give examples of which clauses you believe were breached by staff or delegates?
3. What are your suggestions to StreetNet to ensure that the Sixth StreetNet International Congress in 2019 will be more democratic than the last one in 2016?
4. Are there missing elements which you feel need to be added to the Code of Conduct?
5. What is your view about the "slate" practice during democratic elections?
6. Any other concerns/comments.

In future, we will include the Code of Conduct in the documents packages of every StreetNet event – and all participants will be made aware of their rights in accordance with the Code of Conduct, and those who step out of line can be guided by their fellow delegates using the Code of Conduct, at the time of the problem. We hope that this will increase the level of trust and confidence of our members about the protection of their democratic rights, as well as the level of understanding of all delegates about the ethical limits which apply to the exercise of democratic rights. In the meantime, we hope that there will be a transparent debate about this issue, so that we can do better during the Sixth StreetNet International Congress.

ARBIND SINGH - STREETNET INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY -TALKS ON THE CHALLENGES STREETNET FACES IN A CHANGING WORLD

I believe StreetNet should focus on programmes aimed at bringing macro-level changes through laws and policies which both favour street vendors and change the mindset of administrators and policy-makers so that they integrate street vendors in their cities. Cities across the globe should have plans for street vendors.

The Street Vending Law enacted in India is a good law and can be used to advocate for similar models elsewhere. I am sure many countries have experimented with different models: we must bring them out. Most importantly, it is necessary to develop programmes aimed at generating resources for StreetNet. NASVI's Street Food Festival and skilling of food vendors is worth trying at the global level. In India it helps NASVI generate financial resources and to build a positive image about street vendors around the country.

StreetNet's emphasis on its own organising is quite strong but this must be replicated by street vendor organisations. We need to promote this – and have a charter of good organising. For street vendors organising, advocacy and sustainability need to go together to bring substantial change in their lives. Thus strengthening affiliates on these three pillars should be a StreetNet priority. It is a concern that there are very few members from Asia: my aim is to take StreetNet to more and different parts of Asia.

With more focus on urbanisation, street vendors are facing serious threats globally. Governments divert the issues of livelihoods and jobs by prioritising others such as housing and sanitation, etc. StreetNet has the task of ensuring that governments give priority to livelihoods. This should draw attention to street vending.

StreetNet's funding situation is critical. A challenge we face is how to use digital platforms to reach out to governments. Everywhere there is a talk of a new digital economy. How we prepare street vendors for this new economy is a big task. In this context, the need to provide social security to street vendors is vital.



Arbind Singh, StreetNet International Secretary, NASVI National Coordinator

Though we can keep raising funds, it is important for street vendor organisations to develop collectives which can generate resources for themselves. StreetNet should be able to generate resources through providing its expertise on urban development. Financial collectives are important as street vendors need finances. There is much scope for working towards financial independence in collectivising street vendors.

In my opinion, StreetNet should focus on developing better policies and government schemes for street vendors, and strengthen its organising. It also has an important watchdog role to play, in these changing times with their different impacts. Though older institutions like the ILO are important, many new multilateral and independent private forums have arisen. StreetNet must make its presence felt in all these international forums.

Nowadays street vendors all over the world are going through very troubled times. StreetNet must influence governments of countries in which the situation of street vendors is very bad. It must provide enough support against the eviction or threats of eviction, of vendors. We need to provide relief timeously; we need to come up with solutions which we can suggest to governments and street vendor organisations.

“Cities across the globe should have plans for street vendors.”

STREETNET HOLDS SUCCESSFUL REGIONAL WORKSHOP IN LAOS

by Oksana Abboud- StreetNet Organiser

StreetNet held a successful Regional Workshop on Organizing Informal Workers, on 21-22 November 2016 in Vientiane City, Laos. The workshop was part of a StreetNet-OXFAM partnership.

Forty participants attended the workshop which Oksana Abboud, StreetNet Organiser, facilitated.

The main aims of the workshops were:

- To understand how to organise workers in the informal economy and conduct collective bargaining;
- To learn about international experiences and best practices in other countries;
- To understand the role of trade unions in transitioning from the informal to the formal economy;
- Planning a programme and the way forward;
- Information-sharing on the informal economy.

Participants were welcomed by Mr. Simoon Ounlasy, vice-President of the Lao Federation of Trade Unions (LFTU), Mr. Inpeng Meunvieth, Acting Director of its International Relations Department and Mr. Antonino Faibene,

Programme Manager of the Oxfam office in Laos. Mr Ounlasy highlighted the importance of informal sector workers, their contribution to the country's national economy and the challenges the LFTU faces in organising informal sector workers in Laos. The country's Trade Union Law doesn't mention informal workers and their right to be organised. LFTU plans to amend this law to include "informal workers" in its definition. He pointed out that informal workers outnumber formal workers and are an important source of worker power. When street vendors are brought into society, they become formal workers - a development which can be beneficial in financial terms, i.e. they pay taxes. The budget from the government to help street vendors is insufficient; support from other parties is needed.

Seventy percent of Laos' workforce is active in the informal sector, said Mr Antonino of Oxfam. Ninety percent of these are women, who often lack skills and knowledge and are vulnerable. The Government has not taken any concrete actions to address their situation.

Mrs. Souphone Voravong presented research - 'Street vendors in Vientiane City', Laos" - by UN Women, which underlined the substantial growth Laos had made in its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) over the last few years. This is needed, she said, to help women get income, make them less vulnerable and let them feel they are protected, appreciated and welcomed by society and government. She also suggested training on credit and negotiations for women street vendors, building their capacity, self-esteem and self-respect to strengthen them. The workshop comprised seven activities. The first was

introductory. The rest was made up of small working groups which discussed and developed different tasks around organising and negotiations in the informal economy sector.

The groups first discussed the need to organise workers in the informal economy. Central to this was understanding the specificities of organising in the context of the informal economy, developing appropriate organising strategies and responses for informal economy workers and developing and understanding key skills and abilities required by good organisers.

The groups next discussed addressing the needs and demands of informal economy workers through collective negotiations aimed at gaining a better understanding of some of their problems and demands. They also examined the importance of direct representation in collective negotiations for informal economy workers.

Next, the working groups identified three issues of their sector workers and had to translate these into demands for negotiations. The facilitator explained how this process is done, through simply re-phrasing the issues. She emphasised the use of specific wording as demands should be realistic and aimed at achieving maximum success. This is especially important for an organisation at the beginning of negotiations.

Lessons from trade unions in other countries on organising in the informal economy, followed. Participants used case studies to examine how trade unions around the world organised in this sector. This exercise was to enable them to develop their own thinking and ideas around organising in the informal economy.

One of the most crucial International Labour Organisation (ILO) documents, Recommendation 204, was also discussed and analysed. ILO Recommendation 204 focuses on transitioning from the informal to the formal economy. This activity was important for understanding the meaning and concept of the informal economy, organising within it and the requirements for an effective transition from the informal to formal economy. The groups had to read ILO Recommendation 204, identify the formalisation elements, most progressive clauses and the missing elements in it. Most participants found this task difficult.

To help, the facilitator spoke on the key strategic gains of ILO Recommendation 204, which were very progressive and good for informal workers. She also mentioned those clauses which could harm them, and issues which were missing in the Recommendation, e.g. the lack of inclusion at local level authority level. The last but very important activity, was developing a union strategy for informal economy workers. Participants revisited earlier discussions in order to develop a clear strategy and practical action plan directed towards achieving the vision of the different union groups, in the future.

The working groups drew up their action plans, defining their target groups and key priorities. They presented the step by step actions needed to organise informal workers and to overcome the obstacles they face in building their strategy.

During the workshop evaluation, participants expressed their happiness at learning about organising informal workers, and about ILO instruments. The workshop had offered them a chance to express their own views; however, learning about other countries' experiences was a bonus. Vietnamese and Cambodian delegates had added value to the workshop by sharing their experiences in organising informal economy workers. In his closing speech, Mr.

Simoon Ounlasy stated that LFTU would implement the acquired knowledge and skills fruitfully in its trade union activity. He hoped for further support from both OXFAM and StreetNet International.

The Regional Workshop was successful and very useful for the LFTU participants who had just started learning about organising informal economy workers. Their leadership understands the importance of and need for organising informal workers in Laos; they have a great willingness to learn about this to move forward.

Lastly, StreetNet thanks Khamphy Khammvong, Oxfam Programme Officer in Laos. His dedicated preparatory work made this Regional event possible.



Participants at the regional workshop on informal economy organising in Laos

StreetNet welcomes the Self-Employed and Commercial Workers' Union of Georgia (SCWU) as Regional Focal Point for Europe

Recently, at its International Council meeting in October 2016, StreetNet approved the recommendation of its affiliates from Eastern Europe and Central Asia to establish a Regional Focal Point (RFP) for Europe in Georgia and to appoint the Self-Employed and Commercial Workers' Union (SCWU) as this RFP.

Sister Miranda Mandaria, SCWU President and Coordinator of the StreetNet RFP for Europe,

emphasised the importance of SCWU becoming an RFP, as this will encourage SCWU's further development and add positively, to its overall organisational image. The establishment of the RFP for Europe was the outcome of lengthy discussions by the StreetNet affiliates of Eastern Europe and Central Asia over two years, and three regional meetings in Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan and Moldova. Communication via email and Skype preceded their agreement and signed recommendation which was submitted by letter, by the Regional Organiser Oksana Abboud, to the International Coordinator in June 2015.



Miranda Mandaria, Coordinator of the StreetNet RFP for Europe

WHY NEW URBAN AGENDA SHOULD AFFECT INFORMAL WORKERS

by Oksana Abboud-StreetNet Media Officer



Pictured are Comfort Doryen (second from the left) and Juliana Brown Afari (third from the left) during the UN HABITAT III Conference

The HABITAT III Conference, also known as the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, was held in Quito, Ecuador, on 17-20 October 2016. The Conference brought together a large range of urban actors including local authorities, civil society, representatives of workers in the informal economy, the private sector, academic and professional institutions, and all other relevant interest groups, to review urban policies affecting the future of cities.

Every 20 years, UN HABITAT outlines an urban agenda and this year, a New Urban Agenda was adopted by all the UN Member States. A new urbanisation model sets fresh priorities and strategies that take into account the evolving patterns of the new century, and establishes a roadmap for creating a more just and sustainable urban world. But how national and local governments will do this and what models they will follow, is still a question for everyone.

However, informal workers' organisation, namely StreetNet International, clearly understands its role and affiliates' role in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, which for the first time in its history, includes the notion of and section titled "The City We Need". The City We Need should be based on inclusiveness, fairness and equal rights for every citizen.

We clearly know what we want, and what kind of cities we want to have in each of our countries. This was said by Juliana Brown Afari, Chairwoman of IG VAG Ghana, StreetNet affiliate from Ghana, who attended the UN HABITAT III Conference as part of the WIEGO Network delegation.

During the conference, WIEGO aimed to create spaces for informal workers and their

representative organisations to have their voices heard, to make visible the positive contributions of informal livelihoods to cities, and to advocate for urban policy approaches that result in greater livelihood security for urban informal workers.

Sister Juliana shares some of her impressions while participating in a WIEGO arranged event at the HABITAT III Conference.

"We had a two days' workshop on issues and interaction with WIEGO. Twenty members were invited from various organisations of informal workers, domestic workers, and home-based workers. We were educated on the participation of each person; speeches were prepared and those who would get the opportunity to speak on the platform and the roles of everyone was decided. Those who would be at the booth to see that things were done, were also selected."

Experiences shared came from countries far and wide. In New York, the problem encountered was housing and crime issues, and how to approach the government with informal workers' solution that it contribute to housing for all. Nigeria also shared the issues they faced, namely, women's empowerment, education support and how to approach the government for

a solution. Canada's issues were similar, including how to find a way to approach the government for solutions.

Uganda spoke about their government alone participating at the international level, and how they were looking for a bottom-up approach before taking any action. Ghana's issues included finding laws for informal workers, that will bind their local government for implementation, monitoring local government, and the inclusion of the UN Habitat decisions. Beyond the inclusive cities ideal, informal workers need education, and their inputs and focus have to be on bettering their lives over the next 30 to 40 years.

Liberia was concerned about the role of the City in local government in supporting citizens and NGOs implement development agendas, and equal opportunity for all. South Africans' concerns were around informal workers who had decided to change their way of approaching the government by knowing the laws which influence local government. They also spoke specifically about

the importance of knowing the laws and strategies of the province of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, the overlap between the informal sector and the public service, networking and back-up projects in the private sector. Kampala (Uganda) raised the importance of inclusive economic growth, influencing the improved dissemination of information to informal workers,

and enabling us to translate the New Urban Agenda for the next 30-50 years, for the informal sector, including about lands and mines. South America was strong about more education for informal workers, on food, confiscation of goods, security and safety, its national environmental laws, and national urban policies.

Comfort Doryen, a member of the StreetNet International Council and leader of NAPETUL, StreetNet affiliate from Liberia, spoke about the Monrovia Partnership Project at the conference. Through the project, he said, street vendors and the local authorities opened a dialogue on street vending and were able to come to an agreement on how vending would be regulated in the city. This has helped vendors gain access to certain public spaces and have securer livelihoods.

We need to realise that the New Urban Agenda is a great chance to create space for the voice, experience and strategies of the urban poor in urban policy, planning and development. The urban poor have to be not only recognised as part of negotiations with local authorities, but also as real partners in decision-making processes. We need to face the reality and have the conviction that we have to fight, starting today, for the right to the City to become real and transformed into concrete policies and regulations!

Our rights are defined by our struggle!

POPE FRANCIS BLESSES STREETNET AFFILIATES AT THE THIRD WORLD MEETING OF POPULAR MOVEMENTS

by Oksana Abboud-StreetNet Media Officer

Since 2014, Pope Francis has regularly arranged international meetings - the so-called World Meeting of Popular Movements, which bring together organisations of people on the margins of society. These include the poor, the unemployed and those who have lost their agricultural land.

The World Meeting of Popular Movements has a very special meaning. It helps to lay out the priorities of the pontificate of Pope Francis. It also illustrates how he wants his Church to fulfill its mission in the world.

Invited representatives of informal organisations and grassroots movements to the Vatican, thus focus the Church's attention on those people who today represent almost half the world's population. The Vatican invites them to gather, not only to listen but to speak with and engage with one another. In addition, the Church

provides an open space, on a global scale, for them to organise themselves.

This third World Meeting of Popular Movements brought together about 170 representatives from 65 countries, of various excluded populations – including slum-dwellers, farm workers, street vendors, displaced persons and refugees, unemployed and precarious workers. It took place in Rome, Italy on from 2 - 5 November, 2016. StreetNet affiliates from Angola, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Georgia, Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, Tanzania, Togo, Zambia and Zimbabwe represented informal workers at this meeting.

The panels and workshops held during the four-day programme focused on principal themes which traditionally concern the meetings of popular movements: land, housing, work, and democratic rights, identified by the Holy Father.



Participants of the third World Meeting of Popular Movements with Pope Francis



Juliana Brown Afari (right), represented StreetNet Ghana at the World Meeting

However, new topics and analyses were introduced at this meeting, viz., peoples and democracy; territory and nature and the particular situation of the displaced and refugees. Every discussion was based on the experiences of people who have gone through these conditions, and was oriented towards generating ideas and proposals for helping each other. After working in the groups, Juliana Brown Afari, leader of StreetNet's Ghana affiliate, presented the work of

her group and reported on the following important suggestions:

1. Pass laws which empower local government officials to make key decisions and implement them to influence policies and government funding - issues which affect our communities and informal workers.
2. Create structures which allow our communities and informal workers to participate more in decision-making processes.
3. Combine our mass mobilisation strategies with campaigns to promote voting among informal workers and excluded people.
4. Organise so that members of the informal sector and popular movements are elected to government office.
5. Support education and popular communications to help inform people about candidates and issues so they can actively participate in elections.

On the fourth day of the meeting, the participants were brought to the Vatican City to meet with Pope Francis. He praised the members of the popular movements for giving dignity to the worker, and doing their part to reduce unemployment through their cooperatives.

The Pope received a response from the two-day programme of domestic workers, informal sector workers and migrants. He said he was happy about those who had attended the meeting and the way forward. He sympathised with those who could not get visas to attend. All the participants were tasked with organising more people around the world to know what the Pope has started. He received a document which set out all the proposals made during the four days of the meeting.

A more detailed documentary about the third World Meeting of Popular Movements can be found in: this link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kAaiFg3LpU&utm_source=email_marketing&utm_admin=92191&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Papa_Franc

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StreetNet International publishes the newsletter in four official languages offering affiliates information and opinions.

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