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Floods in South Africa put the lives and future of street vendors at risk

More than 400 people have lost their lives as a consequence of the floods that have hit the region of KwaZulu Natal, in South Africa, over the past week. Durban, capital of the region, is the city where StreetNet was founded and currently hosts the headquarter of StreetNet International. The natural disaster has hit the coastal areas, causing not only death but massive loss of income, livelihoods, homes. **As usual, poverty and social exclusion exacerbate the effects of natural disasters and climate - related events.**

[22% of the total employment in South Africa is in street vending, which generates around 7% of gross domestic product.](#) **People who rely on street vending in the KZN province are now unable to access their usual place of work and find themselves unable to provide for their families and meet their basic needs.** Parellely, the communities who rely on the services of street vendors for their necessities (food, water, clothes and affordable items) are deprived of this opportunity.

Similarly to the pandemic, or as in conflict areas, once again **essential workers such as street and market vendors, hawkers and mobile salespeople pay the highest price.** Climate change and natural disasters are another instance on how the global inequality among workers is brought to the surface.

We express our solidarity to the comrades of StreetNet affiliate – South Africa Informal Traders Alliance (SAITA), to all workers in the informal economy and to all citizens of the KZN region affected by the flood. We are also in solidarity with our team members in South Africa, Annelen Shabbaz, Suvarna Ragunan, Mdu Phenyane and Senior Advisor Pat Horn.

“Many workers have been severely damaged by these floods” said Rosheda Muller, President of SAITA, “We can use all the help available. SAITA is working to assess the situation in the areas affected. We are also collaborating with the government officials”.

We urge all states to implement universal social protection measures for all workers, to ensure that income and dignity are protected and that all women and men have access to the same resources in the face of any disaster.

International Council members

Lorraine Sibanda (Zimbabwe) (President), Alberto Santana (Dominican Republic) (Vice President), Jamaladdin Ismayilov (Azerbaijan) (Secretary), Annie Diouf (Senegal) (Treasurer), Comfort Doryen (Liberia), Jeannette Nyiramasengesho (Rwanda), Gabriela Calandria (Uruguay), Chet Sapkota (Nepal), Angelique Katani Kipulu (Democratic Republic of Congo), Afavi Anastasie Chodatou (Benin), Ken Williams Mhango (Malawi), Aaron Aiah Boima (Sierra Leone), Yasevich Iryna (Belarus), Jose Herminio Diaz (El Salvador), Kadiatou Barry (Guinee).



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We urge international organizations and the international community to focus their attention to the political implications of climate change and climate-related disasters, particularly their interrelation with global inequality.

To those who lost their loved ones and whose homes were destroyed, accept sincere condolences from the StreetNet International family the world over. Kulabo abalahlekelwe yizihlobo, badilikelwa layizindlu sithi, “Alwehlanga lungehlanga.” May the souls of the departed rest in peace.

In solidarity
StreetNet International President Lorraine Sibanda

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