



Global organizations representing 2.1 million informal economy workers call for a just transition at the International Labour Conference

Ahead of the first formal discussions on Just Transition at the International Labour Conference in Geneva (5-16 June), workers from the informal economy are demanding a just transition to a low carbon future. Totalling around 2 billion workers worldwide, informal economy workers like street vendors, market traders, home-based workers and domestic workers make up the majority of the global workforce and more than a quarter of the world's population. Despite being on the frontlines of climate change, informal economy workers face a double penalty: they are excluded from social protection measures and left out of collective dialogues and decision-making.

StreetNet International along with the International Alliance of Waste Pickers, HomeNet International, International Domestic Workers Federation, and Women In Informal Employment - Globalizing and Organizing, who together represent more than 2.1 million informal economy workers from more than 50 countries, will be present at the 111th Session of the International Labour Conference from 5-16 June, 2023 in Geneva, Switzerland. Together, they will be advocating for a just transition that takes informal economy workers' needs and contributions into consideration by:

- Recognizing the work of informal economy workers their tremendous current and potential contributions to **reducing carbon emissions and mitigating environmental damage.**
- **Including organizations of workers engaged in informal employment**, through implementation of Recommendation 204, in **social dialogue, collective negotiations and having a seat at the table in planning and decision-making processes** on the issues that impact them.
- Introducing a **mix of social protection measures, including social assistance and social insurance.** These would function as adaptation mechanisms, enabling informal economy workers to face disruption and transitions in the labor market.
- For the ILO to support member states to **extend safe and healthy working conditions**, part of the "Declaration of Fundamental Principles of Rights at Work" adopted in 1998 (and amended in 2022), so that they **consider the impact of the climate crisis on the wellbeing of workers in informal employment.**

Informal economy workers are the backbone of the economy. For years we have united behind the rallying cry 'Nothing for us without us', and no discussion on just transition is complete without considering informal economy workers - after all, we make up the majority of the world's workforce. As well as being the most impacted, we have the potential to play a huge role in mitigating the impacts of climate change, locally and nationally. — Lorraine Sibanda, President of StreetNet

Globally, informal economy workers make up 60 percent of the employed population, a figure that rises to [89 per cent in Sub-Saharan Africa](#), yet many are not recognized as workers in their countries and are not



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entitled to labor rights and protections. This makes informal economy workers, many of whom are women working as the sole breadwinner for their families, extremely vulnerable to climate disasters and other external shocks, but it also means that informal economy workers' organizations are not included in social dialogue and collective negotiations. Despite being severely impacted by climate change, the voices of informal economy workers are often ignored. The first International Labour Conference took place in 1919, but it wasn't until the 1990s that organizations of informal economy workers were first accredited.

Informal economy workers play a key role in mitigating the impacts of climate change. Street and market vendors, in particular, make locally-produced food and drinking water more accessible and affordable in low-income areas. Along with allied organizations of informal economy workers, the StreetNet International delegation to the 111th Session of the International Labour Conference, composed by worker leaders from Zimbabwe, Rwanda and Dominican Republic, will raise their collective voice so that the contributions and needs of street and market vendors are taken into account to ensure a just transition for all workers.

Press inquiries

For more information or to schedule interviews with spokespersons Lorraine Sibanda (President of StreetNet) and Oksana Abboud (International Coordinator of StreetNet), please contact Margarida Teixeira at media@streetnet.org.za // +351 910919296.

Other spokespeople available on request.

More information

The full position paper is available at:

<https://streetnet.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Just-Transition-ILC-position-paper-ENG.pdf>