



StreetNet News No. 5 April 2005

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 visit the website: www.streetnet.org.za

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StreetNet's work plan for 2005

2005 is the final year of StreetNet's first three-year plan (2003–2005). Provision has been made for many activities to be organised directly by our affiliate organisations in their different countries.

National alliance-building

As has already happened in India, Zambia, Ghana and Zimbabwe, processes of building national alliances of street vendors' organisations are under way in Kenya and South Africa, with StreetNet

support. In Peru and Colombia, we have also negotiated with national trade union centres CUT Peru, and CUT Colombia, to assist us with the process of building national alliances of street vendors in their countries.

StreetNet affiliates

The year started with the following 18 affiliates in 15 countries:

1. **Bangladesh:** Self-Employed Union (SEU);
2. **Benin:** USYNVEPID and SYNAVAMAB market vendors' unions;
3. **Ghana:** Ghana StreetNet Alliance which was formed by the TUC of Ghana;
4. **Guinea:** CNTG national trade union centre;
5. **India:** National Alliance of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) as well as one of its affiliates, Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) of India;
6. **Kenya:** Kisumu Alliance of Street Vendors & Informal Traders;
7. **Korea:** National Federation of Street Vendors of Korea (NFSVK);
8. **Lesotho:** Khathang Tema Bait's'okoli national street vendors' organisation;
9. **Malawi:** newly-formed Malawi Union for the Informal Sector;
10. **Mocambique:** ASSOTSI informal workers' association which was formed by the OTM national trade union centre;
11. **Peru:** FEDEVAL federation of street vendors' associations based in Lima;
12. **South Africa:** Eastern Cape Alliance of Street Vendors and Informal Business Forum based in Johannesburg.
13. **Sri Lanka:** Sri Lanka StreetNet Alliance;
14. **Zambia:** Alliance of Zambian Informal Economy Associations (AZIEA);
15. **Zimbabwe:** Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economy Associations (ZCIEA).

Further applications for affiliation have been received from the Nepal Street Vendors' Union and SINTEIN informal workers' union based in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Exchange visits

Our affiliates NFSVK (Korea) and NASVI (India) are preparing to send delegations of about 5 people to each others' countries on exchange visits so that they can learn directly from each other how they are organising street vendors and helping them to collectively resolve their problems. Previously, there have been exchange visits in Southern Africa between our affiliates in South Africa, Mocambique and Zambia. Recently, a group of AZIEA members from Zambia went to visit the Ghana StreetNet Alliance, and later in the year a group from Ghana will visit AZIEA. Other exchange visits are planned between AZIEA and ZCIEA (Zimbabwe) and between SEWA (India), SEU (Bangladesh) and the Sri Lanka StreetNet Alliance. We have also made provision for exchange visits between FEDEVAL (Peru) and ASSOTSI (Mocambique).

Capacity-building projects

Many of our affiliates will be conducting capacity-building activities to strengthen their organisations and their leadership, with StreetNet's support – such as the Eastern Cape Alliance of Street Vendors, the Malawi Union for the Informal Sector, ASSOTSI (Mocambique) and Ghana StreetNet Alliance.

Workshops

Negotiations skills workshops are planned with our affiliates in Benin and Lesotho. National policy workshops are planned with our affiliates in Bangladesh

and Sri Lanka, with the assistance of the SEWA Academy (linked to our affiliate

SEWA). A national workshop is planned by the Ghana StreetNet Alliance and a workshop on running markets as co-operatives is planned in Zambia.

This year, a regional workshop is planned for the Asian region – to be organised by our affiliates NFSVK (Korea) and NASVI (India). This workshop will hopefully be attended by all our Asian affiliates as well as other organisations interested in affiliating to StreetNet. It will be an opportunity to start

discussing some forms of Asian regional co-ordination.

Leadership training

As our International Council was elected in 2004 for a three-year period until 2007, we will be conducting some leadership training this year for elected leaders. The International Treasurer underwent two days' training in January, and the entire International Council will participate in a training workshop just prior to the next meeting of the International Council in May. It is planned to run another workshop for members of the Executive Committee in August.

Field visits

The International Co-ordinator Pat Horn, visited Sao Paulo in Brazil after the World Social Forum in Porto Allegro in January 2005, and secured SINTEIN's application for affiliation. Another field visit is planned (prior to the Asian regional workshop) to Asia. New affiliates will be visited in Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Despite being badly affected by the terrible tsunami at the beginning of the year, the Sri Lanka StreetNet Alliance is managing to function and is ready for the visit to their country. It is also hoped to make good contacts in other Asian countries so that she can visit these countries to make stronger links for StreetNet.

Partnership with UNI

StreetNet and the global union federation UNI (Union Network International) are planning to work together in Francophone West Africa in a three-year programme starting this year (2005-2007). This programme will involve Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinee, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo. In Benin and Guinee we will work with our affiliates USYNVEPID, SYNAVAMAB and CNTG.

Partnership with PSI

StreetNet and the global union federation Public Services International (PSI) have continued the partnership started in 2003. A joint workshop between StreetNet's affiliate AZIEA and PSI's affiliate ZULAWU was held in February in Zambia, to prepare some joint demands for negotiation with some municipalities in Zambia. We hope to work together with PSI affiliates on joint programmes also in Brazil, Colombia and South Africa.

International Co-ordinating Committee (ICC) on organising workers in the informal economy

StreetNet is part of the international committee which is planning a second national conference on organising workers in the informal economy. The conference will be held in Ghana in December 2005 and will be hosted by the TUC of Ghana.

An African regional workshop is being held in Senegal in April, and hopefully a Caribbean regional workshop will be held in September. The ICC is also working on producing a manual on organising in the informal economy in conjunction with IFWEA (International Federation of Workers' Education Associations).

Media

As usual, there will be two editions of the StreetNet newsletter during the year – the current issue, StreetNet #5 and StreetNews #6 to be published in September.

Our website will also continue to report on the latest news on street vendors in different countries, information about StreetNet and its affiliates, and how street vendors are organising to improve their situation – in English, French and Spanish. This year we will also be running special themes on the website. From January until International Women's Day on 8 March, the theme is women street vendors. Then in March and April until International Workers' Day on 1 May, the theme will be workers (informal and formal) and working-class solidarity. For the last 6 months of the year, the website will run two-month regional themes for Latin America, Asia and Africa. Please keep visiting the website at www.streetnet.org.za to see what's new.

New projects which have emerged

In South Africa, StreetNet is assisting the national trade union centre COSATU with a new project for the establishment of a street vendors' trade union.

In Lesotho, our affiliate Khathang Tema Baits'okoli (KMA) is planning to institute a court appeal against the Maseru Municipality's decision to remove street traders from the streets of Maseru, after losing their first attempt to stop them in court.

Evaluation

We will evaluate our work through our affiliates, as usual. StreetNet's effectiveness will be determined by the effectiveness of our programmes on the ground. Some of the programmes will be dependent on our affiliates and what work they are able to put into making them work. We believe that this approach will be better than top-down programmes where most direction comes from above and not from decisions from the members, and the needs and priorities identified by structures at 'market, pavement and street level'.

Next three-year plan

This year StreetNet will have to start planning for the next three-year plan (2006-2008). This will be planned in detail by the International Council meeting in May, and during the second half of the year we will have to identify donors to work with us and support our work during the next three years.

Self-Employed Women's Association wins court victory in India

The Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) has finally won the right to become a National Trade Union Centre after the Delhi High Court overruled the objections of other Trade Union Centres to its application. The letter below, from Ela Bhatt, the founder of SEWA, to Marty Chen, WIEGO, celebrates this important step forward.

11th February 2005.

Dear Marty,

Thank you, thank you for your congratulations and joining us in our joy.

Yes, there has been a great pride and joy of victory. The unorganised sector workers have in last 3 decades moved from visibility to voice and now representation.

The women have taken leadership in this forward move as they had taken the lead in ILO Convention on Homework. Gandhi said that in a fight for social justice, where weapons are peace and truth, women are the natural leaders – such is our experience throughout in SEWA.

There is also a sense of vindication after we were unceremoniously ousted in 1981 from NLO, with whom SEWA was affiliated. NLO was under the control of the TLA (Textile Labour Association) then.

Almost all CTUs of India had wooed us then to join them, but I realised the need to stand on our feet – when our own parents like TLA could not understand us and threw us out. At last now we have been able to join the mainstream in our own right and hopefully soon voice and represent the issues of the unorganised working poor, including women at national level.

When we started unionising self-employed women workers and those in the informal sector in 1972, we did not have a blueprint or a model to copy or follow. But it was clear then (and today) that it is these workers who should be in the mainstream of the labour movement as they are the vast majority (93%) of the working population of our country. By the present Order of the the Delhi High Court we have fulfilled that goal. Since a

vast number (if not majority) of this working population is women, it is natural that the women take a lead in changing the profile of the labour movement.

However, first we have to successfully pass through the process of verification to gain the status of the Central Labour Union, in India. My joy of the victory is for the sustained loyal efforts of SEWA sisters in mobilizing membership and my senior colleagues, devoted and competent to pursue the right of verification.

Thanking you for your continued support too in strengthening SEWA's status as a labour union.

Best wishes
Yours Sincerely
Ela R. Bhatt

StreetNet-UNI fact-finding mission to Francophone West Africa

StreetNet International Co-ordinator Pat Horn, and Zakari Koudougou, senior programme officer of the Global Union Federation UNI (Union Network International), met with organisations in seven West African countries during a two week trip from 10-25th October 2004, to gather information on informal economy organisation in the region. The fact-finding mission was the first step in a process of strengthening alliances and linkages between UNI affiliates in the commerce sector, informal economy trade union organisations and organisations of street and market traders and hawkers in Francophone Africa. During the visit, meetings were held with trade unions that are organising informal economy workers, with national trade union centres in the respective countries, and organisations of market and street vendors. The organisations we met with are described below.

Senegal

SNECCS (*Syndicat National des Employes et Cadres du Commerce du Senegal*) have started to try to organise street vendors and to work with organised women's groups of vendors.

CNTS, one of the country's national trade union centres, has a programme *Syndicalisation des Femmes* which includes women working in the informal economy. They work with the women's committees in each union to integrate the women they have organised into the different unions. SNECCS is affiliated to CNTS.

SYNTRAS (*Syndicat National des Travailleurs de la Sante* – health workers) and **SUDEMS** (*Syndicat Democratique des Mareyeurs du Senegal* – fish vendors, distributors and processors) are affiliated to the CSA trade union centre in Senegal. CSA has 53 affiliates most of them being concerned with the informal economy. SYNTRAS formed in 2000 and has a combination of formal and informal members numbering 5000. Many are community health workers who work in *Associations de Sante Communautaire* (ASCs). SUDEMS also has approximately 5000 members, and was formed first as a federation, and then became a union. Its members are responsible for the distribution of fish throughout Senegal.

Guinee

We met with the following organisations:

- CNTG (trade union centre affiliated to StreetNet)
- FESABAG (bank union affiliated to trade union centre USTG and UNI)
- SYNCOTEG (hairdressers union affiliated to USTG and UNI)

CNTG was originally the only trade union centre in Guinee, but since the advent of pluralism in 1984, there are at least seven trade union centres, one of which is USTG.

CNTG reported that they have assisted nine organisations to access credit. Mariama Penda of

FESABAG-USTG said she had started to look at working with savings clubs (*tontines*) to help women in the informal economy to access credit. They also organise artists and musicians, and informal money-changers (*cambistes*).

SYNCOTEG-USTG is an informal workers' union in the commerce sector. The union has organised occupational and literacy training. They would like to organise health insurance and sensitisation on HIV/AIDS.

There are many women working in the informal economy and the Ministry of Social Affairs has helped women to get organised through a co-operative, SACCO (*Service d'Assistance de Coordination a Cooperatives et ONGs*) which extends services and resources to trade unions.

The following joint organising initiatives were proposed:

- to form a coalition of informal associations of the union centres CNTG and USTG, with a joint committee to administer the programme in Guinee;
- involve the ILO, which deals with trade union leaders in the *Commission Consultative du Travail*;
- training in literacy and self-confidence;
- CNTG to assist USTG to solve the credit problems of their members;
- education on laws which exist for the protection of informal workers;
- to develop an organising strategy for all the markets of Guinee;
- capacity-building (awareness, education, training trainers).

Mali

CSTM (*Confederation Syndicale des Travailleurs du Mali*) started an informal economy section in 2003 and are working on projects in the informal fishing industry, with vendors of sand, in the hotel and tourism industry, with a weaving project as well as an agricultural project. They work with the federation of associations, **GACDM** (*Groupement de Associations de Commerçants Détaillants du Mali*). **FAFCM** (*Association des Femmes Commerçantes et Entrepreneurs du Mali*) is one of GACDM's affiliates and, in turn, consists of 102 women's associations. FAFCM contacted CSTM after seeing a TV programme publicising their informal economy projects. They are organising the vendors in the 59 markets of Bamako into associations to invite into a new federation.

Togo

We were informed that CSTT and CNTT are the main trade union centres working in the informal economy. CSTT has a support structure for women in the informal economy (*FAFSI – Fond d'Appui aux Femmes de Secteur Informel*) which runs a health mutual, that provides medical benefits for women and their children, and cheaper generic medicines. SYNECTO (UNI affiliate in the commerce sector) have tried to organise informal vendors because they had problems with the municipality. However, they encountered problems in collecting subscriptions and with conflicts between the vendors.

Benin

A meeting was held with **USYNVEPID-CSPIB**, **SYNAVAMAB-UNSTB**, two unions that are organising vendors in the Dantokpa market in Cotonou, to discuss possibilities for joint activities. Members of the two unions explained the problems they have with negotiations with the market authorities, and that it is difficult to achieve satisfactory results. They have undertaken a programme of cleaning the market and of re-education of street children. SYNAVAMAB has acquired land and is collecting contributions for the erection of a building for a crèche for pre-school children. The following possible joint activities were identified:

- negotiations training;
- project management skills (with the simultaneous development of a manual on project management);
- literacy classes;

- a programme on child labour with the involvement of the ILO.

At the Dantokpa market we met the Director General of SOGEMA (*Societe de Gestion des Marches Autonomes*, the organisation which runs the market). There are about 48 000 people in the market at any one time, including:

- 18 500 vendors with selling sites;
- another approx. 3 000 people who assist the vendors;
- approx. 5 000 clients at any time;
- approx. 8 000 other mobile hawkers and wholesalers.

There are 10 associations, and two unions (SYNAVAMAB and USYNVEPID). SOGEMA is encouraging a federation of all the market organisations. This would make it easier to work jointly with them. SOGEMA is discussing building a crèche and a bank in the market for the vendors.

Burkina Faso

FESTRACOM (*Federation Syndicale de Travailleurs de Commerce*) in Pouytenga is an informal commerce union which is 10 years old. Most of the members are illiterate, and 70% are women. The organisation needs to develop demands to present to the municipality for negotiation.

The government of Burkina Faso prepared a very informative publication (*Guide pratique du secteur informel au Burkina Faso*) on the informal economy for the

African Union Summit on Employment which was held in Ouagadougou in September 2004.

Comite Syndicale de Coordination du Secteur de Economie Informelle, is an informal economy project currently in progress with the ILO, chaired by Mamadou NAMA of USTB (*Union Syndicale des Travailleurs du Burkina*). They are preparing to form a federation of the organisations in the informal economy that are affiliated to the different trade union centres in the country.

Niger

SNTIN (*Syndicat National des Travailleurs de l'Industrie du Niger*) have organised vendors of purified water into the Association Pure Water. As an affiliate of SNTIN, the Association has received assistance with training and capacity-building. Two priorities for the association are micro-finance for members, and improving expertise in marketing and distribution, import and export.

In Niger there is also an ILO project co-ordinating the process of organising workers in the informal economy in the four different trade union centres (USTN, UGTN, CDTN and CNT). It was agreed that the national centres have to start implementing the programme. If the joint programme could establish an alliance or federation of informal economy organisations, this body could then apply to affiliate to the international organisations of their choice.

Street vendor Christian Venancio Huapaya killed by municipal police

Lima, Peru - The death of Christian Venancio Huapaya, a 22 year-old street vendor who died as a result of the aggression of "municipal police officers" of the district of San Isidro on the 5th of January 2005 elicited denunciation from street vendor organisations in Peru and StreetNet International and its affiliates.

Police snatched the goods that Huapaya was selling in the Ave Javier Prado, and then assaulted him. He fell to ground, dead as a result of suffocation.

The ten "municipal police officers" (called "Serenazgos") that perpetrated his death have to explain

their actions to the National Police. Freddy Venancio's relatives and hawkers have demanded an explanation from the municipality of San Isidro.

The fatal beating of Huapaya is a clear expression of the brutal way that street and market vendors are treated in Peru and in different parts of the world. The authorities lack adequate policy to regulate street vending even though street and market vendors contribute to development and citizens' welfare. Furthermore, in Peru where unemployment is increasing, it is poverty that forces hundreds of thousands of people to earn a living as street vendors.

The elderly parents of Huapaya, who are also vendors have lost a breadwinner as Freddy contributed to the family expenses. FEDEVAL has demanded that the government and municipal authorities bring those guilty for this crime to justice and that they compensate the family of Huapaya for their loss. StreetNet supports the call by FEDEVAL to the government of Peru to replace the policies that repress street and market vendors. The regulations do nothing to reduce unemployment and poverty. New measures that encourage organisation and regulation of the self-employed street and market vendors are urgently needed.

This situation has caused the unions of street commerce and of micro commerce in general, including FEDEVAL, to co-ordinate and implement joint actions, having formed the Lima Provincial Council for the Organisation of Street Vendors, Fairgrounds and Markets, with the objective of acting in unison to bring our protests and proposals before the President of the Republic and other public and private institutions.

Source: Statement issued by: JULIO CÉSAR MONTOYA C. DNI 08546646 - Presidente de la Central de Comerciantes de Lima Norte (Ambulantes y Mercados) Y de Federación Distrital de Vendedores Ambulantes de SMP; GLORIA SOLORZANO ESPINOZA DNI 0902946 - Asociación de Trab. Amb. 20 de Junio La Victoria, Y Presidenta Red Metropolitana de Mujeres Trabajadoras Ambulantes y Mercados.

Getting organised! Waste-pickers on the move

By Chris Bonner, WIEGO Organisation and Representation

"I see small girls who work from 5:00am till 11:00 am picking the paper. At 2:00pm they go out again until evening. They spend the night sorting the paper and they pass each day, all day, working in this way". Uma-ben, paper-picker and SEWA leader.

"I don't like it. It is horrible, but at 53 who is going to give me a job", asked Alberto Ayunta, a former painter in Buenos Aires, as he sifted carefully through the garbage in front of upscale buildings and stores." This is not the life for me. I'm OK now, but how long can I last? A year from now I could be gone and who will remember me? Nobody".

Working in the early hours, unnoticed, ignored or shunned as they scavenge on dumps and in the streets, as they push their trolleys, carry their sacks, sort recyclables in their back yards, the informal waste-pickers and recyclers go about their work.

In developing countries, huge numbers of women, men and children collect, sort and sell waste from households, streets, factories, offices, dumps, canals and

rivers, in order to make a living. They play a vital role in ensuring the cleanliness of cities, reducing costs of raw materials through recycling, and in improving the environment.

Despite their huge numbers - it is estimated that in developing country cities 2% of the population survive by scavenging - and the crucial role they play, they are generally unrecognised, shunned as backward and dirty, and exploited by middlemen and crooks. They work in terrible conditions and suffer ill-health and disease. Many are harassed by authorities. They are generally not protected by labour or social security law.

In many places, waste picking is women's work. For example, in the city of Pune, India, a United Nations Development Programme showed that about 92% of scrap collectors are women in the age

group 19-50. Most are first generation migrants.

Getting organised

By getting organised, waste-pickers can increase their income substantially. They are able to bargain with municipalities, governments and private businesses for waste collection contracts. They are able to cut out the middlemen who pay low prices but make huge profits by selling at high rates.

By getting organised they are able to gain recognition, and improve their public and personal image. By getting organised they can take advantage when there is a change of attitude by authorities.

In Latin America and Asia, there are many examples of waste-pickers getting organised into waste-picker cooperatives, unions or associations, usually at local or city level.

In Columbia, the Cooperatva Recuperar has 1 000 waste-picker members, 60% of whom are women. They earn 1.5 times the minimum wage. They can receive loans from the co-op, scholarships to continue their studies, and have life and accident insurance. The co-op signed a contract with the city of Guarne to collect, transport and dispose of solid waste. It also provides cleaning and gardening services and offers its members as temporary workers for hire by public and private organisations.

In Argentina, the economic crisis has forced many people out of jobs and into scavenging. In Buenos Aires alone it is estimated that there are 25 000 *cartoneros* and more than 14 *cartonero* cooperatives. One such cooperative is Cooperativa El Ceibo, founded by women, with 102 members, mostly women. They have signed an agreement with the city government to collect recyclable materials that have been separated by participating residents at their homes in a residential area.

In India, in the city of Pune, the Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat (KKPKP), a union of 5 000 waste-pickers, has recently been appointed as the authorised agency to organise daily door-to-door collection of garbage from residential and commercial premises on a full cost recovery basis.

In Ahmedabad, India, the Self Employed Womens' Association (SEWA) has organised waste-recyclers into service cooperatives and negotiated contracts to provide cleaning services and/or to collect waste from government and private institutions. It also supplies members with tools to pick up garbage, aprons and bags, and has negotiated with municipalities to provide identity cards.

Reaching out

Waste picker organisations are beginning to reach out to each other. In India, organisations of waste-pickers/organisations working with waste-pickers have formed a committee. Its role is to create a national presence of waste-pickers, and to raise resources to support organising. The policy framework in India has recently become more favourable for waste-pickers. However, organisation has lagged behind. Municipalities are increasingly privatising door-to-door collection of waste through contractors, thus excluding informal waste-pickers and making rapid organisation urgent.

On the international front, WIEGO (Women in Informal Employment: Globalising and Organising) has agreed to facilitate the formation of an international network of waste-pickers (WasteNet). It will work with its affiliated membership organisations, such as SEWA and StreetNet, that are organising sectors of informal economy workers, organisations of waste-pickers and academics active in the field. The process is in the planning stage but will involve:

- collecting, documenting and exchanging information on wastepicker membership organisations;
- building the profile of waste-pickers through publications and web sites;
- organising and co-ordinating an international conference of waste-picker organisations, and raising funds for this.

If you have information on organisations of informal waste-pickers anywhere in the world, please contact Chris Bonner, of WIEGO, through StreetNet or at chrisbon@absamail.co.za

Information from:

Martin Medina, "Waste Picker Cooperatives in Developing Countries", paper presented at Membership-Based Organisation conference, Ahmedabad, India, January 2005.

KKPKP, "The Case for Organising Waste-pickers in India", A Concept Note, 2005.

Marty Chen, "Waste Pickers in SEWA's membership", 2005.
www.cnn.cm/2003/WORLD/americas/03/26/argentina.train.reut/

World Social Forum 2005 and Sao Paulo visit

By Pat Horn, StreetNet Co-ordinator

A StreetNet delegation brought some visibility and representation of street vendor organisations into the midst of the World Social Forum 2005 in Porto Allegro, Brasil, held between 26th-31st January, 2005. The World Social forum has been held since 2001 under the banner "Another world is Possible". The StreetNet delegation comprised the StreetNet Co-ordinator, Pat Horn, and two representatives from affiliated organisations: Fundile Jalile (Eastern Cape Alliance of Street Traders, South Africa) and Albertina Simango (ASSOTSI, Mozambique).

StreetNet organised a panel discussion on 30th January on "The situation of street vendors, informal market vendors and hawkers – giving attention to the situation of women hawkers and vendors – and opportunities for co-operation with municipal workers and their unions in relation to local governments".

The following participants contributed at the event:

- **Fundile Jalile** on the situation of street vendors and hawkers in the Eastern Cape, South Africa, the experience of his organisation and negotiations with the municipalities of Umtata and Buffalo City;
- **Albertina Simango** on the situation of street vendors and informal market vendors in Mocambique, the experience of ASSOTSI and their negotiations with the municipality of Maputo;
- **Adenilton Mendes de Brito** (SINTEIN) on the situation of street vendors in Sao Paulo, the experience of SINTEIN and their negotiations with the municipality;
- **Jorge Yabkowski** (PSI) on the importance of national trade union centres, including unions of street vendors and other workers in the informal economy among their affiliates, and the possibilities of co-operation between street vendors' organisations and municipal workers' unions in negotiating with municipalities.

A series of events was organised by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), the World Congress of Labour (WCL), ETUC, Solidar, Social Alert and Global Progressive Forum that put the spotlight on the "The Social Dimension of Globalisation".

Pat Horn took part in a panel discussion in this series on "the Informal Economy" on the 29th January, along with Lameck Kashiwa of Zambia, Plamen Dimitrov of Bulgaria, Abdelkhader Azrai of Morocco, Angeliqe Kipulu of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Aminata Traore of Mali, and Ieke Van Den Burg of the European Parliament.

Visit: Sao Paulo

In Sao Paulo, on the way back from Porto Alegre, the StreetNet delegation went to the Head Office of Brasil CUT, where we were met by members of SINTEIN (Sindicato dos Trabalhadores na Economia Informal) and of the International and Organising departments of Brasil CUT. SINTEIN took us for a short tour around the informal trading area of Bras in the vicinity of the CUT offices, before Jalile and Albertina had to leave for their flights back to Umtata and Maputo.

The next day we visited the following locations:

- Central Municipal Market (historic building, built in 1920 and inaugurated in 1932) and adjacent informal trading area of District 25 Marco which
- has approximately 13 000 informal traders.
- Central Cathedral da Se (where Workers Mass is said every 1 May) and the adjacent informal trading area of District 15 Novembro.
- Informal trading district in the vicinity of the Metro and bus terminals of Jabaquara in Zona Sul (southern zone of Sao Paulo) to see members of SINTEIN.

On 3 February a seminar was held at the SINTEIN office, also attended by Comrade Palma of CUT about StreetNet. The question of affiliation to StreetNet was discussed – and supported by a majority vote.

The seminar was also attended by representatives of another independent union of street vendors, SINPESP (Sindicato dos Permissionarios de Sao Paulo) with which CUT has established some level of co-operation. SINPESP is a union of street vendors with permits, that is, affiliated to the Chamber of Commerce.

However, the permits of their members are precarious, and can be easily taken away. In practice, they cannot really confine their work only to vendors with trade permits. SINPESP participates in negotiating forums, alongside SINTEIN and other unions and associations (such as the disabled vendors union and the shop owners' associations) with the Sao Paulo municipality at district level. These are statutory forums called Comissoes Permanentes de Ambulantes (CPAs).

We also visited the SINPESP offices in Santana district (Zona Norte) and in Santo Amaro district (Zona Sul) and toured the surrounding street vendor areas. Santo Amaro is an area with many syndicates – where assassinations have taken place around conflicts over space and influence.

We visited week-end markets in the Japanese area of Sao Paulo and Praca de Republica (central Sao Paulo). The vendors have to have special permits to work in these markets too.

On Monday 7th February, we went to the SINTEIN offices to complete formalities for SINTEIN's application for affiliation to StreetNet, and I was able to bring their affiliation application back with me.

COSATU strategic planning workshop: organising workers in the informal economy

By Pat Horn

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) has resolved to organise workers in the informal economy in South Africa – following the example of national trade union centres in Ghana, Zambia, Mocambique, Tanzania, Senegal, Benin, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Niger and elsewhere in Africa. There are also many national centres in Latin America, particularly the Andean countries (Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela) which have been organising workers in the informal economy.

A national Strategic Planning Workshop was held in Johannesburg on 10th-11th February 2005 to plan for this. The participants were from COSATU's affiliates and regional structures, as well as former members of SEWU (Self-Employed Women's Union) and one representative from Sikhula Sonke, a new union representing seasonal agricultural workers in the Western Cape Province. StreetNet International provided technical support.

The Deputy General Secretary of COSATU pointed out that only 40% of workforce is organised, but the informal economy is not going away. People working in the informal economy are workers, too. Workers in the informal economy need organisation and protection against those who take advantage of their vulnerability.

The organising Secretary of COSATU outlined the objectives of the workshop to take forward COSATU

resolutions on organising workers in the informal economy.

Caroline Skinner, a WIEGO researcher from the School of Development Studies in Durban, presented recent statistics and policy challenges facing the informal economy in South Africa. The International Co-ordinator of StreetNet presented an account of trade union organisation of workers in the informal economy around Africa, Asia and Latin America.

After thorough debate it was agreed to initiate a project towards the establishment of a new union for the organisation of the following sectors of self-employed workers who do not fall under the scope of

any existing affiliates:

- street vendors;
- producer (including home-based) groups, to be organised into co-ops.

Members of the union will pay membership subscriptions, which should be collected by stop order/debit order. Where necessary, members will be assisted to open savings accounts. This union could be an associate member of COSATU rather than an affiliate, at least initially, while discussions continue about the best way for informal unions to fit into COSATU structures.

The gender policies of COSATU will apply – and in addition, the constitution of the new union will include a quota of 50% or 60% for the level of participation by women in leadership and decision-making structures (in recognition of the 60% composition of women in this sector).

Collective bargaining should take place at all levels (bilateral, multilateral, local, regional, national) and with different negotiating partners, depending on the issues being negotiated. Creativity should be exercised in piloting new forms of bargaining. Bargaining procedures should be developed in accordance with well-regulated democratic principles of accountability to members. Collective bargaining will be based on the following two pillars:

- legislative and policy issues;
- demands based on members' articulated needs.

The union will engage with the Employment Conditions Commission in order to establish minimum rights and standards for this sector.

It was agreed that a national Co-ordinator should be dedicated to the implementation of the project – to work with organisers around the country. A Steering Committee and a Technical Committee were set up to provide guidelines and support the Co-ordinator.

The following campaigns will comprise the Programme of Action:

- Campaign on right to trade
- Information/education/rights
- Banks and credit
- Accessing government services
- Co-operatives
- Launch of the new union (planned for June 2006)

One of the workshop participants commented: "This workshop has been an eye-opener. It has shown that you don't need to spend lots of time theorising before you start working."

Eastern Cape Alliance secures funding for micro-credit scheme

Eastern Cape Alliance member organisation, the African Hawkers' Association, has secured a grant of R200 000 from the local government of the King Sabata Dalindyebo Municipality for a micro-credit

scheme for street hawkers in the city.

Fundile Jalile, chairperson of the African Hawkers' Association, said that the funding had been promised by the municipality in 2001 to promote micro-enterprise development, but it was received only in December 2004. At a meeting with the municipality it was agreed that the criteria for hawkers getting the grant was that their licence fees were up to date, that they were citizens, willing to pay back the loan, able to repay and membership of the African Hawkers' Association.

A questionnaire filled in by hawkers helped to establish eligibility and the size of the grants to be distributed. A hundred hawkers in the Mthatha district and 84 from Mqanduli will receive the grants. Hawkers who sell clothes have been allocated R1 000, caterers R600, and those selling fruit, R400. Jalile says the loans do not bear interest and have to be repaid to the municipality within a 12-month period.

Jalile said that AHA plans to apply to the municipality for funding to start a rotating credit fund that the organisation will administer. The micro-credit scheme will enable hawkers to borrow funds and increase their income generating power and earnings as they normally pay high interest rates on funds that they need to borrow before they can buy the goods that they sell to make a living.

In another development in the Eastern Cape, Jalile reported that the three hawkers organisations in the cities that fall under Buffalo City Municipality, had formed a committee of representatives to strengthen their negotiating position with the local government authorities. The Mdantsane Association, Gompers Hawkers Association and the Kingwilliamstown Hawkers' Association, had members in East London, Bisho and Kingwilliamstown and needed to speak as a unified group, rather than as several groups, to be effective in representing the street traders. Jalile said that he had encouraged the organisations to speak with one voice. "There will be no more divide and rule between the hawkers of Buffalo City as if they were not trading under the same municipality". The new structure, called the Buffalo City Informal Traders' Association Committee, has elected office bearers and is meeting to discuss the issues that affect the hawkers who fall under the jurisdiction of Buffalo City. Jalile said that he has encouraged the Committee and its member organisations to pay the fees levied by the local authority for trading because in return they would in return be in a position to demand services and infrastructure. "Hawkers have the right to demand essential services such as water, toilets, shelters and other services needed in the course of earning their living as they contribute to the local government income and taxes", he said.

Source: News report in *Umtata Herald*, 10 December 2004; Report by Fundile Jalile to StreetNet, April 2004; Report on Socio-Economic funding that was granted to KSD hawkers by KSD Municipality.