



StreetNet News

No 15 March 2009

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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Compiled from report by KENASVIT and NEST
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STREETNET's PLAN for 2009 – 2011

By Pat Horn, StreetNet International Co-ordinator

Inclusive Urban Planning Project – 2009 - 2013: “Strengthening the organisation of all informal workers in urban public spaces for direct participation in urban policy development and implementation, through popular campaigns.” This project allowed StreetNet to employ a Campaigns Co-ordinator and two part-time Organising Assistants, who are working directly with StreetNet affiliates as follows:

- Monica Scott Garzaro: Latin America, USA, Southern and East Africa.
- Sibailly Maximilien Douhoure: Asia, West and Central Africa.

The following international theme workshops are planned:

- Employment relations among informal traders (April or May, 2009 in Durban, to be linked to the StreetNet International Council meeting);
- Street vendors and world trade (August 2010 in Benin, to be linked to the Third International Congress);
- Street vendors and disability (May 2011 in Nepal, to be linked to the StreetNet International Council meeting).

The following proposed visits for 2009 will be presented to the International Council meeting for discussion:

CTCP Nicaragua – Eastern Cape Street Vendors' Alliance, South Africa

LDFC Congo – ASSOTSI Mocambique

SEU Bangladesh – TUICO Tanzania

New affiliates FUTJOPOCIF Dominican Republic – FUTRAND Venezuela (once they've paid their joining fees)

An international workshop of representatives from all the different StreetNet affiliates who have participated in exchange visits (including UNI-StreetNet project exchange visits) will be organised, to do a proper assessment of the outcomes and results after these visits. This is proposed for March 2011 in Argentina.

Third StreetNet International Congress:

Cotonou, August 2010 (linked to 2010 theme meeting on World Trade).

International Council meetings:

- April 2009 – Durban (linked to 2009 theme meeting on class relations)
- May 2010 – Maputo (linked to WCCA campaign)
- May 2011 – Kathmandu (linked to 2011 theme meeting on disability)

Leadership training:

This will be workshopped at the International Council meeting in April 2009 in relation to organisational priorities, and will include:

- Materials development (booklets for leaders)
- Link to outputs (urban policy impact)

Activities on Campaigns:

The Campaigns Co-ordinator who was employed by StreetNet was offered another job, but her new employer has agreed that she will organise a national campaign meeting from 17 – 19 March 2009 for StreetNet in Johannesburg. We have found a suitable person who is available for the position of Campaigns Co-ordinator at the end of 2009, and we are head-hunting for a good interim co-ordinator to intensify the campaign leading to the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa.

Website themes will be planned, and a web feature on waste collectors.

Newsletters: dates of issues

2009 – March, July, Nov

2010 – April, July, Oct

2011 – April, July, Nov

2007 Second Congress new issue: HIV/AIDS

We suggest to affiliates that they include this as a module in workshops, and regularly report what they are doing. We will also gather information on what there is, from the ITUC global co-ordinator on HIV/AIDS and global union federations' (GUFs) programmes. A special website theme will be put up on World AIDS Day.

At the end of each year, we will assess progress among StreetNet affiliates on the new issues/themes agreed at 2007 Second Congress):

- HIV/AIDS
- Street vendors and disability
- Street vendors and world trade
- Employment relations among informal traders

Enhancing StreetNet's administrative & operational capacity
 Organisation Development (OD) support will be engaged to assist us to review the following:

1. Salary structure, introduce grading system, performance reviews;
2. IT needs and open-source technologies;
3. Improving planning processes;
4. Develop reserves policy.

TWO NEW ORGANISING ASSISTANTS WILL WORK

MORE WITH STREETNET AFFILIATES

Organising Latin America and Southern and East Africa

By Monica Garzaro Scott

I am a Guatemalan citizen living in South Africa and I am pleased to introduce myself to you as StreetNet's new Organising Assistant for Latin America and the Southern and East Africa Regions.

Through the translation to and from Spanish and temporary work I have done for StreetNet over the last five years I have learnt about StreetNet and the organisations affiliated to it. I have learnt about the pioneering work StreetNet International is doing, by organising street vendors around the world, as well as strengthening women workers' capacity and training in different aspects related to informal economy labour rights and collective bargaining.

My initial link with StreetNet International was through some occasional Spanish translation work. In 2006 and 2007, I worked for StreetNet as the Congress Organiser, to assist with arrangements for the organisational structure that meets once every three years when representatives of all member organisations get together to elect new members for the International Council, Executive Committee and take important decisions on policy and the issues affecting the organisation and sector internationally.

Need for recognition of workers rights

The global increase in unemployment and the related increase in the informal economy have induced a growing demand to organise the workers in this sector, to fight for the recognition and respect of their rights.

Consequently, this has created the need to work with unions, so that they can help in organising more workers in the informal economy. The constant evictions and harassment by the authorities of street vendors made the vendors start to see the importance of being organised and knowing their rights.

If the street vendors are not organised they are more vulnerable to abuses and in some cases, do not have negotiating rights: Hence, the importance of StreetNet's activities, and efforts in the four regions they are working with today.

Work with affiliates to improve conditions

As Organising Assistant of StreetNet, I will work with different non-member organisations who want to join, guiding them on how to affiliate and to answer any queries about StreetNet. The work with affiliated organisations will lead to interesting discussions about some of the tensions and conflicts between street vendors, their successes and defeats, their country efforts to improve their conditions, their learning opportunities through exchange visits and participation in other international activities.

In relation to the work in the Latin American and Southern and East African regions, I hope to motivate the Latin-American organisations to set up their focus point organisations since the Southern and East African region have already set up their office in Zimbabwe.

Affiliates that fall under MONICA

Latin America

CTCP-FNT, Nicaragua

FEDEVAL, Peru

FNOTNA, Mexico

FOSSIEH, Honduras

FUTJOPOCIF, Dominican Republic

FUTRAND, Venezuela

SINTEIN, Brazil

SIVARA, Argentina

Street Vendors project, North America

Southern and East Africa

ASSOTSI, Mocambique

AZIEA, Zambia

Eastern Cape All. of Street Vendors, South Africa

KENASVIT, Kenya

Khathang Tema, Lesotho

MUFIS, Malawi

TUICO, Tanzanian

Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economy Associations,
Zimbabwe

The new StreetNet Organising Assistant for West and Central Africa and Asia speaks!

By Sibailly Maximilien Douhouré

I am based in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, and have been involved in different activities related to social activities of informal economy organisations during the last three years. I joined StreetNet as Organising Assistant in January this year.

From engineer to trade union organiser

I am an engineer in telecommunications, who has worked in social development related to activities for 30 years.

I have worked as a Chief Engineer for 10 years, from 1978 to 1988, in Cote D'Ivoire, and from 1989 onwards, I have been involved with the international trade union movement, opening the International Postal,

Telegraphs and Telephones (PTTI) office in Abidjan in 1989, and working at the office until 1999.

Organising in West Africa

After the merger of four global union federations I worked as the Director of Union Network International (UNI) Abidjan's Office from 2000 to 2005. Between 2005 and 2008 I worked as a freelance consultant around social activities in Dakar, Senegal and in Abidjan.

I am looking forward to organising, as an assistant to the International Co-ordinator of StreetNet, specifically working with the affiliates from West and Central Africa and Asia. There is a total of 16 affiliates to be organised. As I have been working on the African continent for many years I feel I know the terrain well. However, I will be discovering the Asia region concerning the informal economy, as this region is new to me.

Challenge of organising street vendors

I believe organising the workers of the informal economy is a challenge. StreetNet International has started to make street vendors aware of the need to organise since 2002. I'm happy to join the current staff in order to continue this mission. I hope my former experience will be useful concerning the affiliates doing follow-up work, organising educational activities and statutory meetings, holding work sessions, following-up on projects, writing activities reports, articles and documents, collecting information, recruiting of potential organisations, as well as conducting research.

Staff orientation

The orientation meeting for the new staff took place in Durban from January 12th to 23rd, 2009. The priorities for 2009 were defined and this will allow for the two new staff in charge of organising, viz myself and Monica Garzaro Scott, to focus immediately on these activities.

Affiliates that fall under SIBAILLY

Asia

KOSC, Korea

NASVI, SEWA, India

NEST, Nepal

SEU, Bangladesh

West and Central Africa

ASSOVACO, LDFC, DR Congo

CNTG, Guinea

CNTS, SUDEMS, Senegal

FENASEIN, UGSEIN, Niger **SYNAVAMAB, USYNVEDPID**, Benin

SYVEMACOT, Togo

StreetNet Ghana Alliance, Ghana.

Indian Parliament approves social security law for informal economy workers

Report from *WE, THE SELF EMPLOYED, SEWA'S* electronic newsletter, no 17, August-Dec 2008

SEWA's 11 lakh (lakh= 100 000, ie 1,1 million) members from all over India, welcome the "Unorganised Workers Social Security Act" passed by Parliament on 18th December 2008 and congratulate the Government of India and the Honourable Members of Parliament. This is the only Act of its kind in the world bringing social security to 40 crores (crores = 10 millions, ie 400 million) unorganised workers, in India.

An Act for social security for unorganised workers has been SEWA's demand for the last 20 years.

Lobbying for law for 20 years

We first raised the need for such a law with the Commission on Self-Employed Women in 1988, and then with the Second Labour Commission in 2002, and have continually done so with successive Governments since SEWA's previous General Body Meetings passed resolutions demanding this Act; we have taken out rallies in Delhi and in State Capitals, pressuring for this demand and we have taken delegations to leaders to explain the need.

Protection extended to self-employed

Unorganised Workers are insecure and vulnerable and so often slide into poverty in spite of hard work. This Act will provide security to the 40 crore unorganised workers. It will give them a recognition through:

- providing identity cards;
- insurance for a death in the family;
- financial help during illness and hospitalisation;
- help during maternity and;
- support in old age.

The crucial need now is for the benefits of this Act to reach to all those who work throughout India - in the farms of far-flung villages, in the forests and the mountains, in the seas and the lakes, at home and on the streets. It should reach the 40 crore workers who are creating the wealth of India, making it one of the fastest growing nations, so that along with the growth of the country, their lives become more secure.

In particular, it is important that the benefits of this Act reach the poorest and most invisible workers, especially the women. This will happen only if the Act is implemented in an inclusive way, to reach all workers.

SEWA has requested the government to involve NGOs, local bodies, micro-finance agencies, cooperative societies and trade unions in the implementation of the Act. The government should also make available enough funds to ensure the social security of all the 400 million workers in the unorganised sector.

StreetNet Eastern European field visit

By Pat Horn, StreetNet International Co-ordinator

StreetNet's first field visit to Eastern Europe was undertaken by the International Co-ordinator when she attended a Frederich Echbert Stiftung (FES) Eastern European Workshop on "Informal Employment, Organising & Globalising" in Warsaw in November 2008.

WARSAW, Poland

Stadion – Jarmark Europa Open Air market:

This market, until recently, was the largest open-air market in Europe. Many of the vendors have been relocated because the stadium is being

developed for the European Cup in 2012. Buses from neighbouring countries (e.g. Russia, Ukraine, Belarus) bring cross-border traders to sell and buy at Jarmark, which is 50% wholesale and 50% a retail market.

Warsaw is undergoing a modernisation process, in terms of which only 8 of 64 open-air markets will remain. Others are due to be "liquidated" and in some cases, the city authorities have made available land outside the city centre for markets to relocate to.

Meetings with Stadion CEO, All-Polish Vendors' Association: With the income received from the vendors, the association which manages Jarmark provides cleaning and security services in the market as well as social security for vendors and their families.

The All-Polish Vendors' Association is an umbrella body of vendors' organisations, as well as individuals – including representatives of migrant vendors from different countries. There are associations of migrant vendors from different countries. The All-Polish Vendors' Association only recognises those who are registered, both as vendors and in relation to the migrancy laws.

Meeting with Warszawa Straz Meiska – Municipal Guard (City Police): The Straz Meiska was formed by an Act of January 1998, empowering cities to establish self-governing uniformed entities of municipal guards for the protection of the community. Street vending is not illegal, but other laws are used against street vendors, such as those governing damage to public property/space, littering, health regulations, migrancy and refugee laws, customs regulations, sale of contraband goods in contravention of laws protecting intellectual property rights, etc.

MOSCOW, Russia

StreetNet's visit to Moscow was hosted by IUF and UNI, who both have regional eastern European offices based in Moscow.

Most trade unions in this region have a government-oriented approach. Organising is a new idea started three years ago. Since many private sector employers in the former USSR countries do not register their workers according to legal requirements, most of their workers are not properly covered by legislation, are very vulnerable and considered to be part of the informal economy. All independent unions have no option but to organise workers in the informal economy.

FNPR is one of three national trade union centres in Russia. After passing a resolution to increase union membership, they started an all-

Russian campaign for organising the workers in small & medium enterprises. Only 5% of workers in small and medium enterprises are unionised. The organising department is now collecting statistics of the unions operating in this sector, to be able to assess the effectiveness of the campaign in quantitative terms.

Visits to street markets: The Chernikovsky Market is near two sports stadiums. The market is very extensive (similar to Jarmark at the Stadion in Warsaw) with many cross-border traders from former USSR countries working there.

Meeting with migrants' union: This union runs an advice office where migrants come to sort out their registration as work-seekers, after which they have to be registered by employers. There are many abuses of unregistered workers. It is estimated that there are approximately 10 million migrants in Russia, with 3 million of these in Moscow alone.

ITUC Latin American Regional workshop on Decent Work focuses on informal workers in trade union organisation

By Monica Gazaro Scott and Oscar Silva, SIVARA

A Latin American Regional Workshop on Decent Work for Workers in the Informal Economy took place in Sao Paulo, Brazil, from 10th to 12th December, 2008. StreetNet was invited by ITUC to participate in the workshop and it was agreed that an affiliate, SIVARA from Argentina, would attend and represent the organisation. The workshop had the purpose of creating awareness and exploring strategies to support different sectors of informal economy workers in the Trade Union framework. During the event people agreed that it is important to prepare an analysis of the context of the sector related to the work unions have been doing and what is necessary to keep on doing.

Public policy and laws on informal economy

Another aim was to undertake plans to support training activities and expand on the theme of Decent Work for Workers in the Informal Economy for union members. Leadership was tasked with consolidating activities for promoting public policy, legislation on informal work, complying with existing laws and social dialogue with government at all levels (local, national). Participants also identified the need for further training for members of the informal economy sector from organizations such as ILO.

The recognition of informal workers through national and international standards and the crosscutting gender issues were seen as of primary importance when

working to support this sector. The strengthening of organisational skills and networking of informal worker's organisations was emphasised. Further resources are required to help to create commercial exchange between informal union organisations of different countries and networking between organisations will benefit workers in the informal economy sector.

StreetNet proposals to strengthen the position of informal sector workers included:

- Setting up a specific department for the organisation of informal economy workers in the trade unions which can create an extensive data base on organisations and issues that they face;
- Create a Waste Collector's Network;
- Educational material for workers to be available in different languages with easy access.
- Promote exchange visits to different countries.

All of these recommendations were included in the ITUC's action plan. The Action Plan on Informal Economy will be approved and disseminated through all organisations and institutions in different countries.

SATUCC – STREETNET JOINT WORKSHOP: ORGANISING WORKERS IN THE INFORMAL ECONOMY

Southern Africa Trade Union Co-ordinating Committee (SATUCC) – StreetNet Joint Workshop: Organising Workers in The Informal Economy was held at Booyens Hotel, Johannesburg from 2 – 5 October 2008. StreetNet and SATUCC agreed to convene a joint workshop for all the affiliates of SATUCC (14 altogether) and StreetNet in the SADC region in order to:

- (i) promote the organisation of workers in the informal sector in the region;
- (ii) jointly explore ways of improving the labour standards of all workers in the region irrespective of sectors they are in;
- (iii) jointly explore the challenges for the trade union movement;
- (iv) sensitise trade union leadership to prioritise organising of workers in the informal sector, and to make human and financial resources available for implementation of such programmes.

Objective of the workshop

- To discuss ways of dismantling the culture of viewing workers of the informal sector as different from those of the formal sector and agreeing on strategies for a way forward for all workers to enjoy benefits of freedom of association.
- To listen and discuss experiences of some trade unions with regard to organising in the informal sector.
- To enable workshop participants to discuss ways for StreetNet and SATUCC to co-operate on a more regular and systematic basis in the future, with a view to developing a joint programme of activities.

Participants

Each of SATUCC's 14 affiliates and StreetNet International's six affiliates were invited to send two participants to the workshop, of whom at least one had to be a woman – to ensure good gender balance.

African WCCA Campaign Day of Action

To expand the WCCA Campaign to the rest of Africa, it was agreed to organise an African WCCA Day of Action on May 25, 2010 (Africa Freedom Day) to popularise the demands of all informal workers and the urban poor, related to the 2010 FIFA World Cup. This would be organised along similar lines to the World Social Forum international day of action which was done in different countries on 26 January 2008, when there was no World Social Forum international event.

The StreetNet – SATUCC Declaration was approved for forwarding to the SATUCC Congress (being held the following week) for discussion with a view to making a submission to the SADC about policy matters regarding workers in the informal economy.

The next regional SADEC event will be the mid-term regional workshop in 2010, and hopefully by then, there will be some interaction with the SADC in relation to the workers in the informal economy.

SATUCC – STREETNET Joint Workshop DECLARATION

Representatives of 13 SATUCC affiliates in 11 SADC countries, 9 StreetNet affiliates in 7 SADC and 2 East African countries, one independent informal economy organisation in the SADC region and 2 West African national trade union centres (all from Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo,

Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mocambique, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Swaziland, Uganda, Zimbabwe and Zambia) in recognition of the fact that the majority of workers in the SADC region are in the informal economy, have resolved to forward the following policy and action proposals to SADC via SATUCC:

1. Informal workers' labour rights

1.1 SADC member states should align their legislation and policies with the ILO's 2002 Resolution on Decent Work & Informal Economy.

1.2 Existing labour rights should be extended to informal economy workers, including their representation by unions of their choice.

2. Employment creation & livelihoods in informal economy

2.1 The current 5-year strategic plans of SADC should be reviewed to include job & employment creation in the informal economy;

3. Social protection for informal workers

3.1 Tripartite forums in all SADC member states should be enhanced to improve their effectiveness in covering informal economy workers;

3.2 The SADC should monitor that its member states implement signed protocols dealing with social protection;

3.3 SADC member states to extend social protection to informal economy workers (including own-account workers) along the lines of the regional best practice which is in place in Mocambique.

4. Informal workers and representation

4.1 SADC should recognise informal workers as workers;

4.2 SADC should recognise SATUCC as a representative of the interests and concerns of informal economy workers;

4.3 Country delegations to the SADC should include informal economy workers' representatives.

5. Migrant workers and cross-border trade

5.1 SADC should develop policies in the following:

- legal protection of cross-border traders;

- social security for migrant workers and cross- border traders in the region;
- HIV/AIDS;
- educational policy for migrant workers;

5.2 SADC should establish an informal economy board at regional level for the recognition and representation of all migrant workers, including cross-border traders;

5.3 SADC member states should establish affordable shelters at border posts for cross-border traders, with storage space for commodities. Consideration should be given to the establishment of accommodation co-operatives;

5.4 All existing SADC protocols on movement and trade (customs duties, visas, goods clearance) should be respected by all member states and strictly adhered to.

6. 2010 FIFA World Cup

6.1 SADC should commit to making the 2010 FIFA World Cup, which will be held in South Africa, into a SADC event.

6.2 SADC, SATUCC and StreetNet share a mutual commitment to ensure that the 2010 FIFA World Cup benefits the well-being of all the citizens of SADC, including all the workers of SADC, of whom the majority are to be found in the informal economy.

6.3 SADC member states should undertake to respect the rights of all the workers in the region (including those working in the informal economy) in all processes leading up to and during the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

6.4 The provisions of the 2010 FIFA Framework Agreement currently under negotiation between the NEDLAC parties in South Africa (government, business, labour and the community constituency) and the FIFA LOC (Local Organising Committee) should be extended to apply in all the SADC member states.

The following proposals are hereby forwarded to SATUCC for consideration for strengthening SATUCC's capacity to represent the workers of SADC in the informal economy:

1. StreetNet & SATUCC should encourage their affiliates to network more about their work and experiences of organising workers in the informal economy;

2. StreetNet & SATUCC should disseminate information about their activities to all informal economy workers and what they are doing – step up their publicity to informal economy workers;
3. The workers' group in all tripartite forums should include informal economy representatives;
4. SATUCC should play a facilitating role to enable affiliates to participate in bi-partite forums;
5. SATUCC should encourage affiliates to take on informal economy workers' organisations as direct affiliates;
6. SATUCC should create an informal economy desk; 7. StreetNet should participate in deliberations in SATUCC structures on what is to go forward to the SADC;
8. The World Class Cities for All (WCCA) campaign initiated in South Africa in 2006 in preparation for the 2010 FIFA World Cup should be extended to all SADC countries by the affiliates of SATUCC and StreetNet International in those countries – particularly around football training planned in SADC countries and related tourism plans, and the establishment of Fan Parks or public viewing stations in all the SADC countries;
9. SATUCC & StreetNet should give consideration to create a regional body to represent informal economy workers in the SADC region.

World Class Cities For All Campaign – African Day of Action to demand inclusion of the urban poor in FIFA World Cup Games

By Crystal Dicks, Campaign co-ordinator

Plans are currently underway to ensure that the World Class Cities for All (WCCA) campaign, launched by StreetNet International in November 2006, is intensified.

This international campaign will be ongoing in its objective of creating a global consciousness of a new type of World Class Cities for All. A core aspect of this is ensuring the inclusion of poor communities and constituencies in decision-making on all issues that have a bearing on them and making sure that there are equal opportunities for ALL to benefit from the holding of the World Cup in South Africa in 2010 and beyond.

Since the launch of the campaign, the South African Municipal Workers' Union (SAMWU), a principal campaign partner, has agreed to support the

campaign more actively. In October 2008, StreetNet International and SAMWU held a strategising meeting to discuss a way forward. As part of their commitment to the campaign, SAMWU will be:

- Discussing the campaign within their structures;
- Selecting a full-time co-ordinator to be responsible for the campaign;
- Facilitating follow up actions with municipalities that have already been engaged in relation to the campaign;
- Communicating with their structures in the cities not yet approached to collect information about their plans for 2010;
- Collecting information through their members in all cities regarding the plans for Fan Parks and public viewing stations;
- Following up a meeting with the campaign partners and the Host Cities Forum through the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), and,
- Considering ways of placing items on their bargaining agenda for the benefit of street vendors and informal traders, so that if SAMWU takes to the streets in national mass action, street vendors and informal traders can join the mass action in support of demands across the spectrum of formal and informal workers.

As part of advancing campaign work over the next period, StreetNet International will be appointing a Campaigns Coordinator and will be convening a national campaigns meeting in Johannesburg from the 17-19 March 2009. This meeting will be an opportunity to revive the momentum of the campaign as well as plan the details of the campaign programme for 2009.

Campaign activity will also include:

- Communicating with the five of nine remaining host cities to request introductory meetings about the campaign, to initiate engagements with all of them.
- Strategising around the FIFA plans for fan parks and public viewing stations to ensure that these plans are not unilaterally finalised without any participation from the constituencies participating in the campaign.
- Extending the campaign to SADC countries where stadia are being developed for some of the teams' practices, which will take place in Mocambique, Zambia, Swaziland and Angola (which is also where the 2010 African Cup of Nations will take place in 2010 prior to the FIFA World Cup).
- Planning an African WCCA campaign Day of Action on the 25th May 2010 on Africa Day, to encourage trade unions and informal economy organisations throughout Africa to organise simultaneous actions just prior to the opening of the FIFA World Cup.

Durban: Warwick Market vendors will be relocated

By Laura Roberts, StreetNet International intern

A long-awaited meeting organised by the local municipality of Durban on 18th February, 2009 called by City Manager presented the re-development plans for Warwick Market that are being fast-tracked to coincide with FIFA World Cup in 2010.

The development will dramatically change the market where currently an estimated 4 500 traders work in what is a thriving hub of informal economy activity. Approximately one million people pass through the area every day en route from the station, taxi and bus ranks.

Street vendor organisations, members of the Durban-based SISONKE Alliance who are partners of the WCCA Campaign wrote a protest letter to the municipality on January 9th asking why no consultations had taken place. At the meeting the city announced:

- The relocation of 30 registered street food vendors (Bovine Head Cookers) from their current location to the English Market.
- The relocation of 237 informal street traders (permit holders) who currently work in the Warwick Market to a square in front of a new shopping centre.

Exchange visit: NEST, Nepal, visits KENASVIT, Kenya

Compiled from report by KENASVIT and NEST (Wilson Maina – Urban Representative - Nairobi, Dorothy Kalunde – Secretary Machakos Alliance, S.W. Moses – KENASVIT Office Assistant and Ronald Abuga – NASTHA Sec. General and by NEST delegates Janaradan Sharma Parajuli, Vice President of NEST, Deepa Dawadi member of GEFONT and Sarita Dhodari member of NEST)

The Nepal Street Vendors Trade Union (NEST) exchange visit to Kenya National Alliance of Street Vendors and Informal Traders (KENASVIT) from 15-20 June, 2008, was a part of StreetNet's activities to strengthen the informal economy workers' global solidarity. This was the second part of the exchange programme between NEST and KENASVIT. The first was a visit by KENASVIT to NEST that took place in November 2007.

The NEST delegation's visit to Kenya in January 2008 was postponed because of post-election violence in Kenya. NEST waited until the

situation favoured a visit. Finally, the time 15 to 21 June was finalised by KENASVIT. A delegation of NEST, Nepal, composed of Janaradan Sharma Parajuli, vice-president of NEST, Deepa Dawadi, member of GEFONT and Sarita Dhodari, a member of NEST, visited KENASVIT from 15 to 21 June, 2008.

The main objective of the exchange visit was a sharing of experiences between the two organisations and to learn about KENASVIT's techniques to organise informal traders and street vendors in Kenya despite the many challenges it faced. The delegation visited KENASVIT affiliates in Nairobi, Machakos and Nakuru during their one-week stay in Kenya.

Meeting with NISCOF

June 15- On arrival, the NEST delegation was received and welcomed by a KENASVIT delegation who took the visitors to the NISCOF office in Nairobi where, after introductions, NISCOF explained its activities and goals. VITA, one of NISCOF's affiliates, warmly welcomed the NEST group and also discussed their activities and the support that they are getting from NISCOF. They explained the Census of informal traders, the street research done by NISCOF which reflects the actual situation and challenges of informal traders within the Central Business District (CBD) of Nairobi. Likewise, NEST's vice-president also shared NEST experiences, challenges at grassroot level and the struggle to organise the street vendors in Nepal.

June 16- A courtesy call to Nairobi City Council was cancelled due to another engagement of officers.

Visit of Muthurwa Market

Nest delegation writes:

"We visited the Muthurwa Market and observed vendors selling various goods like clothes, shoes, electronic goods, vegetables, fruits etc. The market space was allocated by the municipality so that street vendors can earn a living in a particular place without any disturbance and to minimise the crowds in the street and city places. After getting the market space, street vendors are no longer harrassed like before, and as a result, have more income security. Vendors explained that NISCOF's efforts were successful in convincing the municipality to provide a market vending place for them. It is an example which must be learned by other city councils."

Visit to University of Nairobi

In the evening, the group visited the University of Nairobi and met researchers there who have recently done research on street vendors and helped to spotlight their problems and work conditions. In the evening, Bernard Maingi Isika, Chairman of MASVIT, received the visiting group and they departed for Machakos.

Courtesy call to Machakos Municipal Council (MMC)

June 17- The visitors from Nepal were taken by MASVIT members to meet the Mayor of Machakos where both MASVIT and NEST gave a briefing on the situation of their members and organisations' activities. The visitors noted that the Machakos Municipal Council seemed to be supportive towards the street vendors as it welcomed MASVIT for discussions to solve problems. The Council has provided two separate spaces for street vendors in the town so that they can carry out informal trade without any disturbance.

MASVIT members from different groups briefly described the organisation. It was formed in March 2005 and has 14 affiliated groups with 634 members. The Kivani women's group showed the sisal ropes and kiondos they make. They hope to get a market to sell their handicrafts and for financial support to expand their business. The NEST visitors were very happy to see women actively involved in union organising and being empowered and independent.

Tour of Township Group Project

The Township Group Project is a group of 48 members who contributed money and bought a plot to build small huts where they live. They also have some rooms for rent. With the money collected, they have built a pre-school for their children. Life seems very hard there without electricity or water supply. MASVIT is supporting the group to develop the project.

Tour of Sokoni Juakali and the MMC Market

The group went to Sokoni Juakali and the MMC Market. In Sokoni Juakali there are 77 members who sell clothes at the open air market. The delegation noted that they have a good working relationship with the local authority.

June 18 - The visitors departed from Machakos to go to Nakuru, where they were taken to visit the KENASVIT office and met with KENASVIT and NASTHA members. The KENASVIT president welcomed the NEST delegation and briefed them about KENASVIT. It was established in

1998 for the welfare of street vendors. Since then, it has been working to organise the informal traders through affiliates located in many towns of the country.

Courtesy call to Nairobi City Council

June 19 - We visited Nakuru City Council (NCC) and met Cuorge Kimani, its Public Relations officer. We noted that KENASVIT and NCC have a very positive relationship which helps to create a conducive environment for hawkers in Nakuru. Every three months KENASVIT members meet the Mayor for dialogue to solve the problems of street vendors. As a result, the NCC has agreed to build the hawkers a complex, on which construction had started already. We were informed about the NCC 20-year Strategic Plan, the 5-year Strategic Plan and one year Action Plan for Street Vendors. The NEST visitors noted that NCC is working in co-operation with informal traders.

Visit to Thairira Widows' project

One of the groups visited was the Thairira Widow's Group. This group was established in 2001 and it now has 25 members from different tribes. They are very active and showed us how they make liquid soap, and the process of weaving sheep wool to make thread. The Nepal delegation noted, "We realised that we should also encourage the widowed women in Nepal to be organised in groups to make them active and independent."

Meeting with KENASVIT

The NEST visitors were introduced to all the Central Committee Members of KENASVIT. The NEST vice-president then shared the experiences of NEST, the organisation's goals, problems and struggle to organise the street vendors in Nepal. From the discussion, it was noted that the work of informal traders in both countries is similar and faces similar types of problems. The meeting highlighted the importance of trade unions and federations for the rights and welfare of workers.

"Also, we were informed about the post-election violence which affected many street vendors; some were killed and others were severely injured and displaced. Still, some displaced vendors have not got a proper place to vend. KENASVIT is supporting its affiliates' victims and drawing the attention of the Government to them to try to solve their problems and search for alternative places where they can trade."