

Nothing for Us Without Us: Informal Workers Call for an Inclusive New Urban Agenda.



SURABAYA, INDONESIA, 25 July, 2016 – Today, a delegation of informal workers at the Third Preparatory Committee of the Habitat III Conference (PrepCom3) voiced their objections to the current draft of the New Urban Agenda. Recent changes after negotiations with Country Governments have resulted in a weaker version of the document which has dropped earlier references to a much-needed, more participatory approach to urban planning with communities, including informal worker organizations.

Speaking from the PrepCom3 convention, Rhonda Douglas with Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) stated that “...the current version of the New Urban Agenda pledges that governments will do many things *for* the urban poor, and nothing *with* the urban poor. It lacks any reference to the urban poor as a stakeholder and to grassroots organizations of the urban poor as partners and stakeholders in urban governance.”

Including the informal economy in urban planning and processes is critical considering that more than 50 percent of the urban workforce in most developing countries is informal – ranging from over 80 per cent in South Asia to over 51 per cent in Latin America. With their work, urban informal workers make important economic, social and environmental contributions to their cities and countries.

Gloria Solorzano Espinosa, a street vendor and organizer with Red de Mujeres (National Women’s Network) in Peru and Co-Chair of the Grassroots partner constituency group of the General Assembly of Partners (GAP) stated, “this is why we are in the Habitat III process -- because we believe that the city we need must be economically and socially inclusive for the informal economy. But this can only be possible if the process includes us -- in the dialogues, in the planning and in the implementation. We don’t want a process that promotes the behaviour of the current city administration in Lima that went against the inclusion of us as stakeholders.”

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Informal workers and organizers from Cambodia, Ghana, South Africa, Thailand, Peru, Ecuador, India and Indonesia available for interviews at Booth 21 in the Exhibition Area. Online interviews can also be arranged by contacting Demetria Tsoutouras by text or phone at +1613254-8701 or demetria.tsoutouras@wiego.org.

About WIEGO: Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) is a global action research-policy network that seeks to improve the status of the working poor, especially women, in the informal economy. It does so by highlighting the informal economy through improved statistics and research; by helping to strengthen member-based organizations of informal workers; and by promoting policy dialogues and processes that include informal workers. Visit www.wiego.org for more information.