

**International Conference on Organising in the Informal Economy**

**Accra, Ghana  
25 – 29 September 2006**

**Theme: “Combining Our Efforts”**

**Report**

**October, 2006**

## INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The second international conference on organising in the informal economy was held in Accra, the capital city of Ghana, from 25<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> September 2006 under the theme “Combining our efforts”. This was a follow-up to the first conference which was held in Ahmedabad in India in December 2003.

The conference was organised by the International Coordinating Committee (ICC) which comprises representatives from Ghana Trades Union Congress, Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) of India, StreetNet International, Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), HomeNet South East Asia, ORIT-ICFTU of Latin America and Confederacion Revolucionario de Obreros y Campesinos of Mexico (CROC). The conference was hosted by the Ghana Trades Union Congress.

The objectives of the conference were to:

- share experiences among informal economy organisations;
- develop strategies to intensify organisation in the informal economy;
- build network of informal economy organisations; and
- identify processes of representation at international level (e.g., International Labour Organisation, World Trade Organisation, etc).

### *Pre-Conference Activities*

In the week that preceded the conference, the ICC representatives comprising Kofi Asamoah of Ghana Trades Unions Congress, Pat Horn of StreetNet and Linus Ukamba of Nigeria Labour Congress undertook a number of activities. In addition to the preparation of the conference programme, the ICC organised three media programmes. The first was a media briefing where the ICC briefed a cross-section of print and electronic media representatives. The second activity was a discussion on a national radio station (Uniiq FM of the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation). The third activity was a national TV programme also at the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation.

The ICC used these media to explain the purpose and objectives of the conference as outlined above.

### *Participation*

The conference was attended by 65 delegates from 23 countries and 55 organisations (including global union federations and support organisations) in Africa, Latin America, Asia, UK, and Canada. The list of participants is in the Appendix.

## *Summary of Conference Activities*

The conference activities were undertaken in five days, from 25 to 29 September 2006. **On the first day (25<sup>th</sup>)**, an excursion was organised for the foreign participants to visit and familiarise themselves with activities in the informal economy in and around Accra.

The conference was officially opened at 10:30am on the **second day (26<sup>th</sup>)** at the Miklin Hotel in Accra. The official opening was attended by over 100 people including the international and local conference delegates, representatives from trade unions and government. The conference was addressed by Ghana's Minister of Manpower, Youth and Employment, Mr. Boniface Abubakar Saddique, the Secretary-General of the Ghana Trades Union Congress, Mr. Kwasi Adu-Amankwah, and an ICC member and International Coordinator of StreetNet, Ms. Pat Horn. A solidarity message from the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU) was delivered by Mr. Michael Besha, Assistant General Secretary of OATUU.

In the afternoon of the second day, Dr. Yaw Baah, head of Policy and Research Department of the Ghana Trades Union Congress presented an overview of the Ghanaian society and the informal economy in Ghana. After the presentation, participants mounted their exhibitions about their organisations. The last activity on the second day was a "Cultural Night" which was sponsored by Ghana's Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT). Participants were entertained by Ghanaian traditional music and dance troupes.

**On the third day**, participants were divided into three groups. Members in each of the groups made presentations on their activities in the informal economy in their respective countries and organisations using their exhibitions (which were mounted the previous day).

**The fourth day** started with a plenary session where Pat Horn presented a synopsis of trends gathered from the previous day's presentations. After the presentation and discussion of the synopsis, participants were divided into five groups to discuss the following themes:

- i. Collective bargaining and representation
- ii. Social protection
- iii. Organising strategies
- iv. Skills development and employment creation
- v. Laws and policies

In the afternoon, the reports from the five groups were presented and discussed in a plenary session.

**On the fifth day** (which was the last of day of the conference), Chris Bonner of WIEGO and Crystal Dicks of IFWEA led a discussion of "Worker Education and Capacity Building for Organising" in a plenary session. This was followed by a group work to

discuss the “way forward”. The last session of the conference started with presentation and discussion of group reports on the “way forward”. This was followed by a discussion and adoption of resolutions. The conference closed at 5:00pm on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2006.

### ***Structure of the Report***

The remainder of the report is divided into four sections. Each section reports the main conference activities which were undertaken from the second to the last day.

### ***Facilitation and Reporting***

The report was written by Dr. Yaw Baah (Head of Policy & Research Department, Ghana Trades Union Congress), Akua Britwum (Research Fellow, Centre for Development Studies, University of Cape Coast) and Angela Akorsu (Research Fellow, Centre for Development Studies, University of Cape Coast). They also served as facilitators of the conference together with El Hadji Abdoulaye Diallo (ILO consultant formerly with ACTRAV – Workers Bureau of ILO).

## **ACTIVITIES ON DAY 2 [26 September 2006]**

### **Morning Session (Day 2): Official Opening of the Conference**

The conference was officially opened on the second day (25<sup>th</sup> September 2006) by the guest speaker, Ghana's Minister of Manpower, Youth and Employment, Boniface Abubakar Saddique. Other main speakers were Kwasi Adu-Amankwah (Secretary-General of Ghana Trades Union Congress) and Pat Horn (International Coordinator of StreetNet and a member of the International Coordinating Committee). The summary of the addresses of the main speakers are presented below.

### **Summary of the Address by Boniface Abubakar Saddique, Ghana's Minister of Manpower, Youth & Employment**

Boniface Abubakar Saddique started his address by expressing thanks to the organisers for inviting him as a guest speaker and for providing the opportunity for him to share Ghana's experiences with other participants. He noted the relevance of the conference since the informal economy is the "catalyst for economic development and the engine of growth" in most developing countries and underscored the need for all stakeholders in the economy to focus their attention on the development of the informal economy. He traced the origins of the informal economy in Ghana to the colonial times when a dual economy with two distinct sub-economies emerged. The key features of the colonial economy included the production of primary commodities for export. On the one hand a small formal wage employment covered essentially investment in mining, transportation, infrastructure, commerce, social services and administration. On the other hand, the promotion of the production of primary commodities for export and the import of consumer goods gave rise to "large contingents of the labour force in both agriculture and petty trading". Those engaged in this sector of the economy were either self-employed or hired under traditional or informal arrangements. Saddique noted the attention the informal economy is receiving from policy makers, trade unions, NGOs, and researchers because of its importance in the economies of developing countries.

He expressed concern about the lack of social protection for informal economy workers, the majority of whom are women. He highlighted the main features of the informal economy namely: oppressive and dangerous working conditions particularly poor occupational health and safety standards, high incidence of child labour, low incomes, the lack of access to social services and training, high incidence of exploitation, infringement on workers' rights, and the vulnerability of women in the informal economy.

The Minister attributed some of the challenges facing informal economy workers in Ghana to the “lapses in labour inspection” and assured participants that the Government of Ghana is taking steps to ensure that basic standards are observed in the informal economy to protect all those engaged in the sector.

In conclusion, Saddique reminded the participants that “organising informal sector workers requires nurturing dynamic links with the relevant public authorities and institutions, both national and international that can provide the necessary support” and assured them that the government of Ghana will support the informal economy operators to enable them “overcome the major bottlenecks preventing the growth of the sector”.

Finally, the Minister assured the participants that the Government of Ghana will do what it can to support the implementation of the decisions of the conference both at home and in the international arena.

### **Summary of Address by Kwasi Adu-Amankwah, Secretary-General of Ghana Trades Union Congress**

Adu-Amankwah, the Secretary-General of Ghana Trades Union Congress (the host organisation), welcomed the participants to the conference. He expressed his gratitude to the organisers for choosing Ghana as the host country and the Ghana TUC as host organisation. He also acknowledged the effort the ICC is putting into its work to bring the attention of the world to the plight of informal economy workers.

Adu-Amankwah noted the rapid rate at which the informal economy is growing in both the developing and advanced countries and expressed concern about the “outdated and inaccurate views” and the inappropriate actions on the part of policy-makers towards the informal economy. He challenged governments to develop “context specific policies” to improve the lot of those engaged in the informal economy. Using the Ghana’s experience of the informal economy, he expressed concern about the lack of application of minimum labour standards, inadequate sanitation, overwork, exposure to the sun and rains, the lack of income security, and the lack of credit, marketing and storage facilities in the sector. He singled out street vendors as the ones facing extreme hardships and constant threats of harassment particularly from municipal authorities who do not officially recognise their existence. He urged trade unions and other civil society organisations to continue to strive to promote the rights of informal economy workers and seek to improve their working conditions. He further challenged governments and all stakeholders including government and civil society organisations to ensure the enforcement and respect of core International Labour Organisation conventions in the informal economy. The standards he mentioned included freedom of association, the right to organise and collective bargaining, protection against forced labour, protection against discrimination in employment, right to decent work, right to adequate income and social protection, protection against child labour, and the right of the informal economy workers to consultation and participation in decisions that affect their livelihoods.

On the relationship between trade unions and the informal economy, Adu-Amankwah emphasised the urgent need for unions to organise economy workers into their fold and to offer them the same protection they offer formal economy workers. “For us in the trade unions the growth of the informal economy also raises concern about the decline in our membership and the nature of our representation of working people since fundamental human rights at work are as relevant in the informal as they are in the formal economy. We feel duty bound to organise workers in the informal economy in order to provide them with voice and representation and thereby seek to improve their working conditions. Doing this indeed strengthens trade union intervention in national development”.

In conclusion, Adu-Amankwah identified the organisation and strengthening of the informal economy workers as the biggest challenges that confront the trade union movement today and urged all participants to be passionate, committed, innovative and creative in their effort toward the organisation and mobilisation of workers in the informal economy.

### **Summary of address by Pat Horn (Coordinator of StreetNet International) on behalf of the International Coordinating Committee (ICC)**

Pat Horn briefed participants on the background of the conference. She referred to the ILO Conference which was held in Geneva in June 2002 which adopted Conclusions on Decent Work and the Informal Economy. Clause 4 of the Conclusions states that *“Workers in the informal economy include both wage workers and own-account workers. Most own-account workers are as insecure and vulnerable as wage workers and move from one situation to the other. Because they lack protection, rights and representation, these workers often remain trapped in poverty”*

She explained that StreetNet and SEWA combined efforts to raise funds for the first international conference and invited Ghana TUC, Nigeria Labour Congress and HomeNet of Thailand to join them in organising an international conference of practitioners organising workers in the informal economy with the objectives of sharing experiences, developing strategies to intensify organisation in the informal economy, building a network of informal economy organisations and unions organising workers in the informal economy, and securing representation of informal economy workers at international forums such as the ILO and WTO.

The 2003 Conference, held in Ahmedabad, India, agreed on the following:

- to send a group to attend the International Labour Conference on the ILO in June 2004 to participate in the Committee on Migrant Labour;
- convene a follow-up conference;
- convene regional seminars in preparation for the next international conference; and
- add representation from Americas to the organising committee which resulted in the addition of ORIT and CROC (Mexico) to the ICC.

Horn outlined the inter-conference activities which included the participation in the International Labour Conference (ILC) in Geneva in 2004, the organisation of African regional workshop which was jointly convened by the ILO and the ICC in Dakar Senegal, participation in the 2006 ILC, and the continuation of meetings with the ILO departments and lobbying and advocacy with trade unions and global union federations.

Horn concluded her address with a summary of the objectives of the present conference which were the same theme as the India Conference. She drew participants' attention to the successes of the collective efforts toward the improvement of working conditions in the informal economy workers. *"By now, our cumulative efforts have made our network of organisations much bigger, including street vendors, home-based workers, domestic workers, waste collectors, informal transport workers, agricultural and fishing workers"*. The network now covers Africa, Asia and Latin America with some contacts in Eastern Europe and support from trade unions in Western Europe, Canada and the United States.

Lastly, Horn informed the participants that the network will be developing a manual on organising. Funds have already been raised for the production of the manual. In the absence of a formal institutional structure for the network, Ms. Horn reminded participants that one of the objectives of the conference was to provide a mandate for the direction of follow-up activities.

### **Afternoon session (Day 2): A presentation on the overview of the Informal Economy in Ghana**

#### **Summary of presentation by Dr. Yaw Baah, Head of Policy & Research Department of Ghana Trades Union Congress**

The purpose of the presentation was to provide basic information on the society and economy of Ghana to help foreign participants in particular to familiarise themselves with their new environment and to understand the nature and forms of the informal economy in Ghana, the host country.

Dr. Yaw Baah started the presentation with an overview of the main features of the Ghanaian society to contextualise the second part of his presentation which focused on the informal economy. The main issues covered in the first part of the presentation included the size, the structure, growth rate and sex ratio of the population of Ghana, the average household size, ecology, administration, languages, ethnicity, level of urbanisation, literacy rates, HIV/AIDS prevalence rate, crime rate, and life expectancy in Ghana.

The second part of the presentation focused on the economy. The issues covered included the size of the economy, relative contributions of the major sectors to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), per capita income, inflation, interest rates, exchange rates, and the medium term policies of the Ghanaian government. Other issues covered included economic activity rates, the size of the formal and informal sectors in total employment,



unemployment, under-employment, distribution of the workforce by industry, occupation and by gender.

The last part of the presentation focused on the informal economy in Ghana. He defined informal economy to include all “unregulated” economic activities (including unregulated activities in the agricultural sector). According to Dr. Yaw Baah, over 80% of the Ghanaian workforce is engaged in the informal economy leaving less than 20% of the workforce in the formal segment of the Ghanaian economy. He categorised informal economy operatives into four broad groups – self-employed (without employees, who form the majority of the workforce in the informal economy), self-employed (with employees), employees, and unpaid workers. He identified the employees and the unpaid workers in the informal economy as the most vulnerable among the four categories of those engaged in the informal economy.

Most informal activities in Ghana take place in agriculture, trade and manufacturing which are also the three most important sectors in the economy. Together the three sectors employ approximately 84% of the total workforce in Ghana. Women form the majority of the informal economy workers. Informal economy workers in Ghana have no access to social protection benefits such as pension, sick leave with pay, holiday with pay, etc. Since the Ghana’s labour laws are not enforced in the informal economy, workers there are made to work long hours without overtime payment, health and safety standards are poor, and the majority of the informal economy workers earn below the national poverty line (which is around US\$1 a day).

Dr. Yaw Baah provided figures to explain the main characteristics of the informal economy workers. Using the latest Ghana Living Standard Survey data, he compared informal economy workers with their formal economy counterparts. The indicators he used for the comparison of the two sub-economies included the average size of firms, distribution of workforce by age, gender, industry, locality, and region. Other characteristics he used as basis for comparison included level of education, marital status, nationality, degree of unionisation, mean annual household income and expenditure.

In conclusion, Dr. Yaw Baah highlighted the characteristics of informal economy workers which included unsafe working conditions, lack of legal and social protection, low incomes, harassment by government officials, the lack of representation in national policy-making, the lack of official recognition and support. Finally, he summarised Ghana government policy strategy on the informal economy and noted that the government’s strategy is to support the “economic unit” in the informal economy but not the individuals in the sector. In other words, government policy is to support the small and medium enterprises in the informal economy to have access to official financial support in the form of loans. The implication is that the self-employed (with employees) whose activities are more visible are likely to benefit from the official support at the expense of the self-employed (without employees) and the employees in the informal economy who form the majority of the total workforce in the sub-economy. He reported that, although some local authorities are making efforts to provide basic social services such as toilet facilities for informal economy workers, social protection issues are not

clear in government strategies to support the informal economy workers. He also noted that although government has initiated some measures to provide support for the informal economy operatives, such policies and measures are usually “patronising” in the sense that the informal economy operators are not allowed to take part the decisions leading to the formulation of such policies.

Dr. Yaw Baah’s presentation was followed by lively discussions which came to a close at around 4:00pm.

### ***Mounting of Exhibitions***

The last activity of the second day was the mounting of exhibitions by participants. These exhibitions were used for presentations on the third day of the conference. The activities of the third day are reported in following section.

## **ACTIVITIES ON DAY 3 [27 SEPTEMBER 2006]**

The third day’s activities commenced with the self-introduction of all participants. Participants took turns to announce their names, their respective organizations as well as their countries of origin. The session was chaired by Kofi Asamoah, Deputy Secretary-General of Ghana Trades Union Congress and a member of the International Coordinating Committee (ICC).

After the self-introduction, participants were grouped into three to present their exhibitions on their organizations and /or countries. In line with the objectives of the conference, the exhibitions and presentations were to:

- share experiences and strategies for organising in the informal economy;
- build a databank on networking organizations;
- establish trends for working towards representation at the international level

The following questions were used as a guide for the presentations:

- How do you organize (What initiatives)?
- What are your peculiar challenges?
- What are your successes (Best practices)?
- What have not worked (Gaps / shortfalls)?
- What networking or collaboration strategies do you use?

The summary of the various presentations are reported in the following table.

## Summary of Presentations

No.	Country / organisation	Organizing strategies	Challenges	Best practices	Shortfalls	Networking/affiliation
1.	<i>International Support organisations</i> <b>ICFTU/AFRO</b>	Capacity building through affiliates	Unfriendly labour laws Complexity of informal sector  Lack of political will to organise in the informal economy	Increased awareness of affiliates for the need to extend coverage to informal sector	Lack of political will on part of governments	Affiliates in 53 centres in 46 countries
2.	<b>OATUU</b>	Work through affiliate national centres and community based opinion leaders	National policies on the informal economy Funding Unable to measure impact	Getting formal union centres to organise informal economy operators	Lack of ICT in some countries	Affiliates in all African countries
3.	<b>WIEGO</b>	Supports the organisations of informal workers  Works through national trade union centres or individual organisations	Funding access	Provide support to associations in ff areas: - Urban policy research - Social protection - Statistics - Organisation and representation - Global market research	Making research results accessible to members	Members are individuals and organisations spread in several countries
4.	<b>FNV</b>	Support National trade union centre works through bilateral relations with national trade union centres and national unions	Getting bilateral collaborating national unions to work within specific framework i.e. results based approach	Support to improve trade union rights HIV/AIDS education General trade union education	Working within requirements of donors and Dutch government	Works through global unions and NGOs that provide support to trade unions

5.	<b>IFWEA</b>	Provision of labour education and training  Regional and national meetings and conferences	Funding Sustainability	100 affiliates 65 countries 5 regions training manual for trade unions as well as for informal sector	Weak staff strength. Only one permanent staff	FNV PSI The Global Unions
6.	<b>StreetNet International</b>	International solidarity, Capacity-building of national street vendors orgs				25 affiliates in 21 countries: 15 in Africa 6 in Asia 4 in Latin America
7.	<b>DOAWTU</b>	Setting up cooperatives for women in Informal economy e.g. Ghana, Guinea  Training I.E. workers income generating activities and then organize them into trade unions	Our main challenge is to promote and defend workers' rights through out the African continent	Informal economy trade unions have been created in some countries.  Trained I.E. workers in income generating management  A network has been set up	Organizing has not been enough  Many I.E. workers still lack protection and still have low incomes	
8.	<b>LO/FTF Council</b>	Do not organize directly but support democratic development of trade unions in Africa, Asia and L. America.	Our main challenge is to contribute to democratic development in the societies in which the unions operate	Provides technical and economic support labour movement in developing countries	Still has work to do in the area of democracy (Social dialogue), workers' rights, poverty reduction and occupational Health and Safety	Works with Trade unions in Africa, Asia and Latin America
9.	<b>GHANA</b>  Timber and Wood Workers Union (TWU)	Skills training (managerial and bookkeeping skills) Grievance handling for several Informal sector groups	Funding to cover servicing informal sector operators	Credit access and welfare schemes that can be extended to social security scheme	Unable to convince informal sector operators to contribute to support associations Regularise operations for protection	BWI

10.	Maritime and Dock Workers Union (MDU)	Union formed company to absorb retrenched members who work as casuals	Position as union employers create conflict of interest and reduce confidence of workers represented	CBA to cover workers and leadership training for workers representatives	Membership drive to Inland Fishermen of Volta Lake thwarted by suspicious members	ITF Transport Federation of GTUC
11.	Society of the physically disabled	Employment creation Income generation opportunities	Negative attitude of society to disabled	Employment and credit access Disability Act finally passed to promote and protect rights of disabled	Lack access to employment, health education and credit	Affiliated to GTUC International Organisation of the Disabled
12.	Madina Shoe Sellers Association of GTUC	Welfare assistance to members	Working to provide access to health insurance	Welfare fund Credit access Affiliation to GTUC	Negative attitude of government Harassment from local authorities	GTUC NGOs—ADRA Ghana
13.	Cassava Farmers Association (President's Special Initiative)	Association of Farmers supplying Cassava to Factory Disciplinary and conflict resolution between farmers and factory management	Farmers suspicion of factory Fluctuation of international price of cassava	Provide ready market to farmers Conduit for farmers to access farming inputs and improved farming practices	Unable to promote farmers interest that stands to undermine survival of factory	GAWU of GTUC
14.	Darkuman Containers Traders Association	Interest representation Welfare association	Location on disputed land	Provided access to insurance cover	Lukewarm attitude of Members to activities of association	No networking yet
15.	Grass Cutter Keepers Association	Cooperative Service provision: access to breeding stock and easy market		Market access Quality check for grass cutter raising	Maintaining membership interest beyond service provision	GAWU NGO support: GTZ
16.	Construction and Building Materials Workers Union	Identify and organize through the various informal economy associations	The mobility of the informal sector workers restricts our ability to organize them.	CBA to cover both formal and informal. -wages - Health and safety An informal desk with a full time employee	Unable to provide social security for the informal sector members yet.	PSI Building and wood workers International GTUC

17.	GAWU – Manchie Women’s Cassava Processing Group	Dance drama and songs Workshops for Women cassava farmers	Financial constraints	Formal school for members’ children - from nursery to JSS Education on health and safety Functional literacy programme	Inability to market our finished products.	GTUC GAWU EU
18.	Makola Traders Union	Easy to organize because members are clustered at one location, which is the Makola Market	Many uneducated members and so effective communication is restricted	2,000 members including street vendors around the market 300 street vendors have left the street Pays social security Education on health, management and accountancy skills Welfare services for aged	Male participation is low	StreetNet Ghana Alliance GTUC
19.	Streetnet Ghana Alliance	Advocacy Education / Training Negotiation and Bargaining	Some of the market associations have political undertones and so difficult to organize them	Have organized 15 market centres in Ghana Some pay social security Developed leadership manual for the informal sector	Our activities have been restricted to the main markets in the main cities only.	StreetNet international GTUC LO/FTF FES USAID
20.	Health Services Workers Union	Using contact persons and associations to organize is our strategy for organizing	Problems of mobility How to secure interest, commitment and confidence of workers	Yet to start work in the informal sector vigorously.	No pitfalls yet.	GTUC, PSI Medical and Health workers union of Nigeria
21.	<b>BENIN</b>  SYNAZEB, National Union of Motorbike Taxis	Welfare assistance and Negotiating body between Taxis drivers government and city authorities Membership covers service providers, incl. • Street cleaners	Government hostility to impact of motor bikes to environment	Welfare/Solidarity/Credit fund Safety/traffic training HIV/AIDS and STD education Negotiating with National bank to grant credit to members	Irregular contributions Absence of state policy on the informal sector	Benin – Niger – LOFTF collaboration

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roadside petrol sellers</li> <li>• Vendors at station</li> </ul>				
22.	UNSTB (Trade union Organisation of Benin)	<p>Interest representation Education Welfare provision Identify contact persons Whip up interest Focus group discussion Credit union groups</p>	<p>Unions affiliation to political parties Union leaders absorbed into political party leadership Lack of national policy</p> <p>Trade union pluralism – now 7 trade union centres</p> <p>Political interference</p>	<p>Extends coverage to informal economy workers Social security/pension fund Credit access Training Assistance for collective bargaining HIV/AIDS Education Training manual CBA that covers both formal and informal operators Insurance for some informal operators Developing a manual for informal sector Education and training programmes</p>	Party affiliation affects leadership and increases government hostility	<p>StreetNet Danish Government Bilateral support Support from the formal sector</p>
23.	USYNVEPID - Benin	Organize by mobilizing market people ( Mainly women)	<p>Getting women to realize that they can take up leadership positions and negotiate for things that affect them. To form a women only movement Creating access to micro credit Establish a social security fund</p>	<p>Educate and train members Improve market sanitation by organizing clean up campaigns Established a solidarity fund with low rate micro credit Increased participation Increased understanding of collective bargaining issues</p>	<p>Though membership is mainly female, the executive board is dominated by men</p> <p>Clashes with police</p> <p>Some members still lack knowledge of market regulations</p>	<p>StreetNet International</p> <p>CSPIB national Trade Union centre - Benin</p>

24.	<b>INDIA</b>  NASVI of StreetNet	Representation and service provision	Hostility of city authorities	Social security/pension fund: Injury/invalidity and survival benefits Credit access Training manual Collective bargaining for members	Small secretariat servicing association  High mobility of members	StreetNet International
25.	<b>SIERRA LEONE</b>  Sierra Leone Labour Congress	Service provision, use of contact persons to organize and register informal economy workers into National Social Security	Years of war devastated national economy Union regarded as a political party  High rate of illiteracy – 75%  No access to loans	Utilise provisions in labour legislation to protect informal economy workers Uses labour courts to seek redress for members Members buy credits in pension scheme	Extreme difficulty of collecting contributions Low incomes so unable to make substantial contributions Distrust management of such schemes. High administrative cost on the side of the institution	Still exploring national and international alliances Plans and working towards collaborating with national insurance schemes in the West African sub region
26.	<b>NSSIT</b> National Social Security and Insurance Trust – Sierra Leone	Register informal economy workers into National Social Security	Inadequate funding Mobility and invisibility of the informal sector operators	Draft policy to amend the social security Act to cover the informal sector	Unable to understand the management and operation of social security schemes Unwilling because pension does not meet priority needs	Works closely with the Sierra Leone Labour Congress
27.	<b>MALAWI</b>  Malawi Union for Informal sector (MUFIS)	Representation for dues paying membership	Lack of national policy on the informal economy Continuous harassment of members by city authorities	Dues paying membership spread all over country	Members more interested in immediate benefits than interest representation Association severely resource constrained	MCTU at the national level, StreetNet International SATUCC, OATUU ICFTU-AFRO LO-Norway
28.	<b>BRITAIN</b>  UNISON	Building links with community and voluntary organizations Creating community alliances Working with sister union movements	There is no national commitment yet.	Education on employment rights  Advocate for recognition of migrant qualifications	Only a small scale effort	Religious organizations  Community organizations



29.	<b>KOREA</b>  Korea Street Vendors Confederation (KOSC)	Street vendors started to organize 20 years ago after crack-down by government during Olympic games	Financial problems  Political instability – dealing with problems of the north and south	Have 16,000 members in 600 branches Are located in 70 cities and towns Protest against harassment and eviction of members from streets	Some cases of harassment and eviction of members from the streets still exist.	Collaborates with the 2 major trade union centres in Korea, the Peasants League and the Labour unions
30.	<b>MALI</b>  UNTM	Cooperatives Took advantage of DANIDA intervention in organizing informal sector workers Women’s organizations in the informal sector	Government interference High rate of illiteracy Lack of access to credit Resistance due to fear of tax	Able to create employment for some  Some have been affiliated to the main trade union	Not yet able to provide social security for members	FES  DANIDA  Swedish NGOs
31.	<b>SENEGAL</b>  CNTS	Use credit schemes to whip up interest.	Initial resistance from the main trade unions	40,000 members from agricultural sector 5,000 women members Regular meetings Good representation Regular payment of dues Help one another	Unable to retain the members Unable to provide health care support	
32.	<b>NIGER</b>  USTN	Contact person for the identification of groups  Campaign for membership drives	Mobility of the informal sector Members do not make time for union activities  Informal sector actors are mostly illiterates	Formed a federation of Informal Sector Workers  Some members contribute to the Social Security	There are still a lot of informal sector workers not contributing to social security.	Part of Ghana – Benin – Niger – Sierra Leone LO/FTF collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ILO Actrav</li> <li>• DANIDA</li> <li>• ICFTU Afro</li> </ul> OATUU
33.	<b>MEXICO</b>  CROC	Creates cooperatives and organizes by sectors.	Looking for sectors to be included in social programmes	Provides free legal advise  Have created nurseries and schools for adults through contributions	Low salaries of members	

34.	<b>NAMIBIA</b>  LARRI (workers' education organisation)	Informal economy associations organize the I.E. Operators	Getting the main trades union centre in Namibia to organize I.E. workers is a challenge	Awareness and sensitisation workshop of union leaders about I.E. The Main trades union centre has formed an I.e. Committee Researches conducted to ascertain the possibility of Trade union intervention in the I.E. is completed	Lack of access to credit and unfavourable laws still affects informal economy workers in Namibia	National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW)
35.	<b>ZIMBABWE</b>  ZCIEA	Informal economy associations came together to form ZCIEA.  Organize workers through service provision	Government hostility, interference, victimization and harassment often based on unwarranted suspicion of another political party. Some files and loose foreign currencies have been confiscated  Government effort to set up parallel organisation	Main success has been engagement of govt. in dialogue over disturbances. ZCIEA provided technical support for the preparation of the Millennium Development Goals report Weekly meetings have led to improved communication between ZCTU and the Informal Economy structure HIV/AIDS education	Main shortfalls include inability to improve living standards among members as expected by the ILO Decent Work Agenda.  Unable to influence policy  Lack of funding to finance activities of organisation	StreetNet International  ZCTU and ZINACO (Zimbabwe National Association of Housing Cooperatives)
36.	<b>HONG KONG</b>  Domestic Workers General Union	Organizes through contact person leads	Inaccessibility to these workers is the main challenge because one needs permission to visit them	Pressurize government to provide retraining for such workers  Offers training on labour laws, human rights and skill enhancement	Still have a number of unpaid workers – domestic assistants, housewives  Sex workers still not empowered	Affiliated to Hong Kong Trades Union Congress (HKTUC)

37.	<b>NIGERIA</b>  NLC	Organizes through identified target groups e. g. domestic workers, yam sellers, photographers etc.	How to develop a feasible product to service these target groups is the main challenge	Act as guarantors for them to access small and micro credits	Still have a lot of unorganized Informal Economy workers to organize.	
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## DAY 4 ACTIVITIES [28 SEPTEMBER 2006]

Day 4 started with the presentation of the synopsis of the previous day's work by Pat Horn (ICC member). She began by observing that in comparison to the 2003 conference, an element which dominated the presentations and discussions of the Accra conference was the relationship between informal workers/associations and trade unions and national trade union centres. This she attributed to the fact that most organisations present were linked in one way or another to trade unions, whereas some had not reached this stage of their development by 2003. Details of the synopsis are presented below.

### SYNOPSIS: THE SITUATION OF INFORMAL ECONOMY ORGANISATIONS

*Presenter: Pat Horn*

*Chairperson: Linus Ukambia*

#### ***Organising Strategies***

There was a general agreement that organising workers in informal economy posed difficulties such as:

- ♀ Funding shortages, illiteracy, invisibility, and mobility of informal workers;
- ♀ New forms of informal work are always evolving – to cope with this, organising strategies need innovation and adaptability (e.g. the use of dance and drama);
- ♀ Getting the right balance between service provision, on the one hand, and voice and representation, on the other.

Organising strategies presented by participants showed variations that ranged from servicing members to interest representation. Organisations that were trade union- based were stronger on representation and voice, whilst informal economy organisations appeared stronger on service provisioning.

Welfare provision was recognised as an organising strategy that can eventually evolve into social security systems. Access to social security formed the greatest attraction for informal economy workers and their organisations to join trade unions in Ghana and Sierra Leone, where access to social security has become an incentive for people to join organisations. Links with social (e.g. environmental, HIV/AIDS) or community (e.g. health or education) issues can enhance organising strategies.

#### ***Policy environment***

Lack of national policies on the informal economy is a problem in most countries. In some countries there are loopholes in legislation which can be used (e.g. Benin) to get registration or collective bargaining. In Sierra Leone, existing policies offered opportunity extend collective bargaining rights to informal economy workers.

#### ***Class***

Class relations remain blurred in most informal economy enterprises, and as a result organisations have had to develop strategies to accommodate informal operators as well as people who work for them (including casual and unpaid family labour).

## ***Gender***

The presentations pointed to the fact that women form the majority of informal economy workers and consequently they should play more prominent leadership roles. The trade unions organising in the formal economy were limited by their own male dominance, and therefore not able to assist much in this regard. Unions however stand to increase their membership if they focus on organising women in the informal economy – e.g. as seen recently in Guinea when market women’s role in a general strike was decisive in the demands being won.

## ***Relationship with Trade Unions and National Trade Union Centres***

In several instances the association with trade unions give informal economy organisations more credibility and protection. However trade union ability to facilitate representation of informal economy workers depend their strength. High levels of trade union plurality in some countries exacerbates the problems of informal workers, and competition between national centres for informal affiliates creates additional confusion.

In some countries, trade unions have still not really committed to organising workers in the informal economy. This is also a problem.

National trade union centres setting up their own enterprises (sometimes even co-operatives) causes confusion when they cannot balance their employer role with their trade union role.

The challenge for trade unions is how to structure their relationship with informal workers’ organisations. Some of the possibilities are:

- formal direct affiliation;
- terms of reference determined in agreements such as a Memo of Understanding;
- associate membership (which is sometimes seen as an interim arrangement)
- affiliate sectoral or trade organisations, or federations, which have brought together different informal workers’ organisations (or presumably general informal workers’ unions)

Some of the relationships described in the meeting between informal organisations and national trade union centres are still developing (e.g. in Ghana, Zambia).

## ***Alliances and networking***

Apart from relationships with trade unions and national centres, other forms of networking and alliances can be helpful or harmful. Relationships which result in political interference are common. On the other hand, networking is essential to organising. Alliances with social movements have often been useful. Eight of the participant organisations are affiliated to StreetNet – which gives them access to international solidarity. Direct linkages with the ILO and regional trade union centres like OATUU, ICFTU-AFRO, WCL-DOAWTU provide access to valuable technical and financial resources.

## **GROUP WORK**

The principal event on Day 4 was group work on five themes. Group members were expected to share their experiences in their organisations using the following questions as a guide:

1. What peculiar challenges do we face in relation to our organisations?
2. What do we want to achieve?
3. What strategies do we have in place to achieve our aims?
4. What opportunities can we utilise/have utilised (policy, practical activities or programmes)?
5. What processes do we need at the international level to support our national efforts?
6. Other matters specific to the thematic area under discussion

The issues discussed at the group level were reported at a plenary in the afternoon. The following are the summary of the issues discussed in the five groups.

### **GROUP ONE: Collective Bargaining and Representation**

The group noted that laws governing collective bargaining exclude informal economy workers and went on to stress that any attempt to extend collective bargaining to informal economy workers should be gender and class sensitive.

#### ***1. Challenges of collective voice and representation in the informal economy***

The factors identified as constraining the provision of collective voice and representation for informal economy workers derived from 3 main sources namely national governments, workers and formal trade unions.

Challenges emanating from national governments included:

- i. Absence of legal protection for informal economy workers Lack of an institutional framework for effective communication
- iii. Lack of legal and institutional framework for negotiations and enforcement of agreements
- iv. Failure of governments and local authorities to recognise the economic significance of the informal economy in national economy.

On the part of trade unions that organise informal economy workers the group noted the following challenges:

- i. Weak institutional capacity and
- ii. Lack of access to relevant information

Among informal economy workers, the following challenges were noted:

- i. Poor leadership and managerial skills Lack of awareness of their labour rights and responsibilities and the willingness to exercise them
- iii. Indifference among workers in the informal economy to trade unions and collective representation Traditional and cultural barriers to representation and leadership roles, especially for women and the youth.
- v. Lack of capacity and confidence to relate with appropriate national agencies
- vi. Blurred class distinctions within the informal economy.

## ***2. What do we want to achieve?***

Members of the group agreed that their main aim in seeking collective bargaining and representation for informal economy operators was to:

- i. Provide legal recognition for the labour force in the informal economy;
- ii. Press for the enactment of National Policy framework for the informal economy within their respective countries;
- iii. Raise awareness on rights and responsibilities of operators within the informal economy.

## ***3. Strategies for achieving our aims***

The main strategies for achieving their aims were:

- i. Research to identify the needs of the informal economy
- ii. Organisation of the informal economy based on their own experiences and needs
- iii. Education and training on rights and responsibilities for all actors in the Informal economy by state institutions like the National Commission for Civic Education,
- iv. Educational programmes by leaders of the informal sector groups to their members, mass communication, oral communication
- v. Networking between organisations working in the informal economy.
- vi. Social dialogue involving all actors of the informal economy with legal backing.

## ***4. What opportunities can be utilised?***

- i. Representation on tripartite structures such as exists in Ghana could be expanded to include the informal economy.
- ii. Some national trade union centres such as the TUC of Ghana have existing policies on the informal economy which can be utilised as a basis for strengthening representation and collective bargaining.
- iii. Existing local government structures used to organise informal economy workers for tax collection can be used to demand formal recognition by local authorities.
- iv. Finally the sheer size of the informal economy can be used to justify the need for policy changes in the interest of informal workers

## ***5. What processes do we need at international level to support our national efforts?***

Strengthening International solidarity and issues-based networking on best practices that are relevant to Collective Bargaining in the informal economy presents itself as a useful rally point at the international level to advance the collective voice and representation of informal sector workers.

In addition policy integration on the informal economy in regional and sub-regional economic groups like the ECOWAS, COMESA etc offers an additional international level activity that can be used to enhance the interest of informal economy workers

*Facilitator: Dr Yaw Baah*

*Rapporteurs: Edward Kareweh and Owusu Koranteng.*

## **GROUP TWO: Social Protection**

### ***1. Current Social Protection Challenges***

Conference participants lamented the lack of access to major social protection facilities like National Health Insurance schemes, pension, employment security and the near absence of Occupational Health and Safety provisions for informal economy workers. For them the major challenges affecting access were the:

- i. Lack comprehensive policy on informal economy coupled with the Negative perceptions of policy makers of informal economy workers and the importance of their activities to national economy. As a result female workers who are located in domestic service face varying forms of violence from their employers
- ii. Low levels of income that force workers to de-prioritise social protection
- iii. The resistance of informal economy workers to the efforts by trade unions to offer them protection. This resistance was based on the lack of credibility of union officers generally owing to past experiences of extortion

## ***2. What do we want to achieve?***

The main aim of group members was to facilitate the:

- i. Extension of existing pension schemes to informal economy workers or where possible establish separate scheme
- ii. Formulation of a National policy on informal economy
- iii. Enactment of legislation to cover domestic and workplace violence
- iv. The monitoring and adherence to O H S requirements
- v. Promotion of education and awareness creation campaigns that target informal economy workers
- vi. Easy access to formal credit
- vii. Creation of avenues for informal economy workers in national policy engagement

## ***3. What strategies do we have in place to achieve our aims?***

The group identified strategies that were either the responsibility of national governments or the informal economy organisations.

Strategies requiring state commitment included:

- i. Networking and lobbying with parliamentary groups and policy makers to enact legislation
- ii. Getting governments to improve access to formal credit schemes or reduce the interest rate on existing formal credit

Self-help Strategies:

A separate Welfare and Credit Fund or even a Credit Bank will help to promote employment security for informal workers. In addition educational and sensitisation programmes assist to promote greater adherence to occupational health and safety and appreciation of the need to invest in pension schemes. The social protection needs of informal economy workers will be better met if it is informed by research to assess needs and measure the impact of existing scheme. Needs and impact assessment were identified as major strategies.

## ***4. Existing Opportunities for Facilitating Social Protection***

The existence of Social Security schemes in the countries of members was identified as a great opportunity. In some countries there existed provisions that covered informal economy workers.



Other opportunities included provisions in labour legislation in countries such as Sierra Leone allows the extension of collective bargaining to some forms of informal economy workers and therefore extended formal social security provisions to such workers. The relations with formal trade unions centres provided occasion for members of affiliated informal economy organisations to benefit from social security provisions granted workers in the formal economy.

### ***5. International Processes for facilitating the extension of social protection***

Informal economy organisations through their national trade union centres are affiliated to several global unions and international and regional trade union centres. Such affiliations should be utilised for information sharing and international solidarity actions and partnerships towards greater extension of social protection to all working people in the informal economy.

*Facilitator: Akua Britwum*

*Rapporteur: Angela Akorsu*

## **GROUP THREE: Organising Strategies**

The group underscored organising strategies as key to the survival of trade unions.

### ***1. Current Organisational Challenges***

They identified challenges on the part of governments, local authorities trade unions and informal economy workers that affect the ability of trade unions to organise informal economy operators.

1. On the part of trade unions such challenges included:
  - a. Lack of skilled organisers within the trade unions
  - b. Funding restrictions compounded by a lack of political will on the part of union leaders to provide the required resources for mobilising informal sector workers
  - c. Lack of clear cut trade union policy on organising in the informal economy
2. The group lamented the absence of national policy on the informal economy as a major organisational obstacle.
3. Municipal and local authorities in their bid to beautify towns and cities constantly harass informal economy workers, forcing them to be continuously mobile and consequently difficult to locate for follow-up activities.

### ***2. What do we want to achieve?***

1. Improve the livelihood of their members
2. Expand membership in trade unions and increase union density
3. Establish a federation of informal economy workers
4. Influence national policies to be sensitive to all working people especially informal economy workers
5. Extend collective bargaining rights to informal economy workers

### ***3. What strategies do we have in place?***

The group identified the following as the main strategies for supporting organisational efforts in the informal economy.

1. Adoption of policy guidelines for organising in the informal economy
2. Establishing a desk or department within the trade unions to support and coordinate union efforts at organising in the informal economy.
3. Offering leaders of informal economy organisations greater access into union decision making structures.
4. Sensitising informal economy workers to the need to join trade unions and utilising contact persons to facilitate their organisation
5. Creating credit facilities or negotiating for a discount on interest rate paid on formal credit.
6. Negotiating for flexible tax payment for informal economy workers
7. Finally extending credit facilities to spouses of members of informal economy organisations

#### ***4. What Opportunities are there?***

The group identified the following as opportunities that could facilitate the achievement of their goals:

1. The fact the informal economy operators are already organised into trade associations
2. ILO decent work programme provides opportunities for wider trade union coverage in the informal economy
3. The existing networks amongst trade unions and informal economy organisations
4. The simplification of regional protocol of COMESA which has drawn in several SADC countries as members
5. Provision to allow informal economy workers to make tax payments by instalment in some countries

#### ***5. What processes do we need at the international level to support our national efforts?***

International assistance in organising informal economy workers should be directed at training for trade union personnel as well as a more concerted effort at exchanging educational materials and personnel amongst trade unions organising in the informal economy.

The group suggested linkages with European Trade Union project on organising in the informal economy and a sustained lobbying of global unions to increase their activities in the informal economy. An expansion of the working relations with the ILO and the new international confederation of trade union that will emerge in November will also help to facilitate informal economy organisations within member countries.

*Facilitator: Linus Ukamba.*

*Rapporteurs: Andrew Tagoe and Foster Kotey*

## **GROUP FOUR: Skills Development and Employment Creation**

### ***1. Informal Economy Skills Development and Employment Creation Challenges***

The major challenges facing skills development and employment creation in the informal economy were funding for training, low formal educational background, access to training opportunities as well as the criteria for selecting members for training. Group members again lamented the absence of a clear policy for vocational training. Formal sector training had its limitations in terms of providing adequate preparation for informal economy skills requirements. Persons with disabilities located in the informal economy faced numerous accessibility problems since the design of structures and public facilities ignores their physical challenge.

## ***2. What we want to achieve***

The immediate skills and employment creation needs of informal economy which required attention were:

- i. Decent work and sustainable jobs
- ii. Facilitating a link between informal economy workers to formal institutions
- iii. Providing access for informal economy organisations to influencing government policies
- iv. Changing public perception of persons with disabilities
- v. Using skills training as a platform for organising informal economy workers

## ***3. Strategies and opportunities for skills training and employment creation***

- i. Research to identify features of informal economy
- ii. Providing greater representation of informal economy workers in policy making and retraining programmes
- iii. Designing special employment projects and rehabilitation centres for persons with disabilities
- iv. Public awareness in all countries to support the disabled
- v. UN conventions for example those that cover persons with disabilities offer a good opportunity to demand greater government attention to the needs of persons with disabilities,

## ***4 International processes and support skills training and employment creation***

International collaboration in the production of a standardised training manual for skills development will was identified by group members as a key process for facilitating skills development amongst informal economy workers. The group called for donors to soften loan conditionalities imposed on developing countries. The group also requested resources for training from international organisations.

*Facilitator: Crytal Dicks*

*Rapporteurs: Marina Nyamekye and Alberta Laryea-Djan*

## **GROUP FIVE: Laws and Policies**

### ***Overview of existing laws and policies affecting for informal workers***

The group in an overview of existing laws and policies noted that all countries represented at the conference have ratified some of the core ILO conventions but none have ratified the conventions on rural workers and homework affecting many informal workers. Some countries have adopted other international instruments such as Convention on the elimination of all kinds of discrimination against women (CEDAW). National constitutions contain fundamental rights and some labour laws cover some informal economy workers such as casual workers. The status of own account workers under labour law is however either unclear; such workers are in some instances excluded or enjoy limited coverage by some provisions. Social security law has been extended to informal workers in some countries and special provision made to encourage them to join such schemes. All countries have policies that cover informal economy workers but they are either fragmented or generalised and not specific to offer the needed protection that workers in this sector need.

## **1. Challenges**

Despite the existence of some beneficial laws and policies informal economy workers as a result of lack of information fail to enjoy their provisions. The general challenges identified included:

- i. Laws are often unclear and subject to different interpretations often to the disadvantage of informal sector operators. In addition some regulations and laws beyond labour legislation infringe on the rights of informal workers generating confusion, contradictions as well as a lack of coordination
- ii. Limited access to legal dispute resolutions structures which are normally highly centralised and very costly
- iii. Inadequate protection for women in the informal economy especially in terms of their maternity rights
- iv. Weak public institutions for monitoring the implementation of legislation and policy and to enforce compliance to the benefit of informal economy workers
- v. Fast changing policy environment without adequate thinking about rights of workers or their participation
- vi. The policy position of the international financial institutions promote deregulation and liberalisation of the labour market thus promoting informalisation pushing more formal sector workers into the informal economy. Restrictions on cross border trading

## **2. What do we want to achieve?**

The group outlined the following major goals:

- i. Facilitating the enactment of an umbrella legislation covering specific needs of informal workers both the waged and own account. This legislation will cover workers' right to:
  - ♀ Decent work;
  - ♀ Means of production;
  - ♀ Access to all forms of affordable social protection;
  - ♀ Representation and to be heard;
  - ♀ Organise and be recognised;
  - ♀ Affordable, accessible dispute and legal procedures;
  - ♀ Negotiate and bargaining with appropriate authorities (compulsory participation of women);
  - ♀ Genuine participation in tripartite structures/policy making forums.
- ii. Seeking the amendment of provisions in existing laws, to take into account the rights and needs of informal workers
- iii. Seeking the enforcement of existing laws where favourable to informal workers
- iv. Ensuring that the specific needs of women informal workers are provided for in law and policies

- v. Ensuring the full and genuine participation of informal workers in policy and law formulation and implementation.

### ***3 Strategies and opportunities***

The group identified the need for research and advocacy to inform the push to extend law and policy to informal workers. Campaigns, strikes, pressure groups, demonstrations against /for laws and policies will be utilised to commit government to enact laws and enforce compliance. The group recognised the need for informal economy organisations to be engaged in policy formulation and negotiations at different levels to change policy and legislation. Opportunities that can be utilised to achieve aims and support the strategies outlined were identified as existing national and international alliances in the area of information sharing and solidarity actions amongst workers that can be used to exert pressure on governments. Such strategies will be particularly effective in countries where laws and policies are ignored and workers rights abused.

### ***4. International processes to support national efforts***

- ♀ Campaigns for ratification/adoption of ILO Conventions and other UN instruments useful to informal workers
- ♀ Identify and work towards new ILO instruments useful for informal workers- generally or specific groups
- ♀ Involve and work with human rights bodies to protect workers
- ♀ International solidarity actions and activities (e.g. sanctions) to put pressure on law and policy makers on issues that affect informal economy workers
- ♀ Find ways of pressurising the IMF etc to allow governments to implement policies favourable to informal workers
- ♀ Provide a voice at international level for informal workers- create special structures for partnership and cooperation within the ILO.
- ♀ Identify, document and disseminate information on best practices on law and policies affecting informal workers
- ♀ Carry out research and develop model laws, policies and agreements for use in negotiations
- ♀ Develop international tools/materials for capacity building so that informal workers can effectively engage in policy formulation and negotiations

*Facilitator: Chris Bonner*

*Rapporteur: Kofi Takpo.*

## DAY FIVE [SEPTEMBER 29, 2006]

The first activity on Day 5 (the last day of the conference) was a discussion on “Worker education and capacity building for organising and strengthening organisations of informal economy workers”. The session was facilitated by Chris Bonner and Crystal Dicks from WIEGO and IFWEA respectively.

The objectives of the session were to:

- Share ideas and identify priorities on what education and training is needed for building organisations of informal economy workers
- Inform the development of an organising manual/handbook/guide that can support the growth and development of organisations for informal economy workers
- Collectively contribute to education and training ideas for the future

The session took the form of group work where each group discussed the following questions within the time specified:

1. **Who** needs education and training for building informal economy worker organisations? In unions? In informal economy worker organisations? (e.g. leaders) *5 minutes*
2. **What** are the key skills and knowledge needed for organising informal economy workers and strengthening their organisations? Please provide details. *20 minutes*
3. Agree on three **priority** education and training areas for your target groups? *20 minutes*
4. What **activities and/or resources** would be most useful in providing the education and training identified? Booklets? Manuals to use in workshops? Organising guide? Others? *15 minutes*

### Report from the Groups

1. Participants identified leaders of trade union and informal economy organisations, organisers, members, union educators, desk officers, women and the youth as categories of persons who required education and training for building informal economy organisations
2. The key skills and knowledge needed for organising informal economy workers and strengthening their organisations identified were:

#### ***Knowledge***

- The nature and role of the informal sector in national economy
- Trade unionism and its benefit to working people
- Language proficiency in local languages
- Knowledge of the legal framework
- Economic literacy
- Informal economy policy process

#### ***Skills***

- Management and leadership skills
- Basic organizational skills: (recruitment and organising, resource mobilization governance)
- Financial administration and Planning skills

- Negotiations, Lobbying and advocacy skills
- Information and Communication Technology Skills
- Communication skills: for recruiting (organisers)
- Networking and experience sharing (case studies and best practice approaches)

3. The priority education and training areas for target groups outlined by participants were:

- i. Leadership – Advocacy, leadership, Collective Bargaining skills, Lobbying, management, communication skills, conflict resolution, Knowledge of national economies and sectors, trade unionism, policy development process, social protection
- ii. Organizers – Awareness and sensitization, advocacy and lobbying organisational skills, Knowledge of national economies and sectors Grievance handling
- iii. Membership – Basic skills and literacy, trade union education, Health and safety, HIV/AIDS
- iv. Informal Economy organisations’ leadership –basic organizational skills, Grievance handling, Basic literacy and numeracy

4 Activities and resources identified as being most useful in providing education and training:

#### **Activities**

- Conducting research: meetings, study tours, seminars/workshops, using the media (including electronic)
- Developing educational programmes and integrating informal economy education into mainstream labour study and trade union programmes and courses
- Developing educational materials in the form of leaflets, newsletters, training manuals
- Ensuring that the ICC manual has a several modules that can be adapted to several situations
- Action orientated training and educational programmes to link into practical activities with campaigns

#### **Resources**

- Leaflets, newsletters and popular training manuals – with cartoons, and translated into local languages
- Modules (sector specific or country specific)
- Human resources
- Stationery ICC manual: rendered into several forms e.g. CD/folder

## **The Way Forward**

The second activity on Day 5 took the form of group work where participants discussed possible post-conference events. The questions that guided the three groups in their deliberations were:

1. How would we like to see the new international trade union confederation addressing the organisation of workers in the informal economy?
2. What activities do we want to organise after this conference?
3. How should we co-ordinate these activities?

*The facilitators were A Diallo, Akua Britwum and Angela Akorsu.*

*Foster Kotey, Andrew Tagoe, Edward Kareweh and Kofi Tagoe served as reporters.*

The reports of the groups have been summarised in the table below:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Addressing the Organisation of IE Workers</b>	<b>Post-Conference Activities</b>	<b>Co-ordination</b>
One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise and prioritize Informal economy</li> <li>• Social dialogue should be used at the global level to deal with the Informal economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience sharing</li> <li>• Unionise unorganized groups in the Informal economy</li> <li>• Convene meetings of Informal economy operators</li> <li>• Educate general secretaries</li> <li>• Engage governments</li> <li>• Media programmes to sensitise general public</li> <li>• Create linkages between Informal economy organization</li> <li>• Regular meeting between trade unions and Informal economy organisations.</li> <li>• Explore the possibilities of creating micro finance schemes</li> <li>• Education and training</li> <li>• Restructure internal organization of Trade unions to facilitate organising informal economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooperation between stakeholders</li> <li>• Bi-lateral and direct relationships between Trade unions and Informal economy organisations.</li> </ul>
Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representation of informal economy workers' interests in new international confederation</li> <li>• Transfer of good practices</li> <li>• Strong research department</li> <li>• Specific Action Plans should include Informal economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICC manual to be developed</li> <li>• Organize national and regional programmes –training, conferences, action researches, use of existing researches</li> <li>• Identify similar initiatives and resources – collaborate, avoid duplication</li> <li>• Launch aggressive and effective recruitment campaign</li> <li>• Work towards an effective and comprehensive national policy for Informal economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ICC should serve as coordinating body</li> <li>• Collect &amp; Collate feedback from national and regional efforts</li> <li>• Encourage national &amp; international efforts</li> <li>• Facilitate the organization of regional and international conferences</li> </ul>
Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion of Informal economy operators in programmes on Informal economy</li> <li>• Representation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The resolutions should be presented for discussion at the next Vienna conference</li> <li>• Organize an international conference on Informal economy in 2008</li> <li>• The conference must select reps for the Vienna conference</li> <li>• ICC should coordinate the Informal economy activities until the next conference</li> <li>• Networking and sharing of experiences</li> <li>• Dialoguing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICC coordinate activities towards congress in 2009</li> <li>• Nominate representatives</li> <li>• Improve post-conference networking amongst participants</li> </ul>



## CONCLUSIONS ON THE WAY FORWARD

1. The conference resolved to recommend that the new international trade union confederation to be formed in Vienna from 1 – 3 November 2006 should address the organization of workers in the informal economy in the following ways:
  - establishment of a Department for the informal economy;
  - informal economy workers' issues to be included as a priority area in all plans and programmes of the new confederation, such as Specific Action Plans and research programmes.
2. The conference noted that a number of the participants in the Accra conference and/or their organizations would be attending the launch of the new international trade union confederation consequently they were tasked with reporting to their organizations and seeking their support for these recommendations. It was agreed that they should work together at the launch and during the month beforehand, to advocate for the adoption of the measures proposed by this conference.
3. A third international conference on organizing workers in the informal economy under the theme "Combining our Efforts" should be convened in 2009, which will be hosted in Mexico by CROC (Confederacion Revolucionario de Obreros y Campesinos) and its affiliate FNOTNA (Federacion Nacional de Organizaciones de Trabajadores No Asalariados).
4. The ICC endeavour to organize further regional seminars prior to the next international conference. How many should be convened, and when, will depend on how much funding can be raised for regional activities.
5. A manual will be produced during 2007 as an organizing guide to be used by organizers organizing workers in the informal economy, for which funds have already been secured by the ICC.
6. The conference resolved that a Forum for trade union Educators on organizing in the informal economy should be convened, using the next international congress of IFWEA (International Federation of Workers Education Associations) in 2007 in Ahmedabad, India, to start the process.
7. Networking will continue to be intensified between informal economy workers' organizations, trade unions, national trade union centres, global union federations and research institutions, for the promotion of organization of workers in the informal economy.
8. The members of the ICC should use organisational resources/facilities like websites to coordinate towards the 2009 Mexico conference. Participants were also urged to utilise their own initiatives to coordinate organisational facilitates and forums wherever they congregate after this conference.

## **RESOLUTION OF THE GHANA CONFERENCE ON ORGANIZING IN THE INFORMAL ECONOMY**

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Following from the December 2003 Conference in Ahmedabad India, the Ghana Trades Union Congress, in collaboration with Self-Employed Women's Association of India, Nigeria Labour Congress, StreetNet International, HomeNet South East Asia, ORIT-ICFTU of Latin America and CROC (Confederacion Revolucionario de Obreros y Campesinos) of Mexico convened an International Conference on "Organization in the Informal Economy; Combining our Efforts" from 25<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> September 2006 in Accra Ghana. In all, 65 delegates from 23 countries and 55 organizations from Africa, Asia, UK, Latin America and Canada participated in the conference.

The Accra Conference noted:

The enthusiasm with which the various topics were discussed and experiences shared and a common approach sought to develop a cohesive and systematic diagnosis to the unrecognized and appalling working situation of informal economy workers. The commitment of participants to find a common approach minimizing the unfair labour practices which characterizes the informal economy was amply demonstrated.

The enormous challenge that organising within informal economy posed but recognised that it was not insurmountable due to promising prospects for collective efforts at various levels. The conference focussed on the following five themes which were discussed in detail, bearing in mind the need to bridge the existing gap between the formal and informal workers and therefore resolved as follows:

**Organizing Strategies:** There was general agreement that organizing workers in the informal economy is difficult because of the peculiarities of their situation and diverseness of their working conditions and class relationships, and the general absence of national policies applicable to their situation. To devise effective organisational strategies we recommended:

- The establishment of federations of informal economy workers
- Development of guidelines for organising in the informal economy
- Research to identify target groups of informal economy workers and their needs
- The establishment of a department within trade unions to support and coordinate union efforts at organising in the informal economy
- Utilising contact persons within informal economy to facilitate trade union organisational drives
- Enhancing informal economy workers' access to credit
- Allocating a dominant role to informal women workers in organizing strategies

**Collective Bargaining and Representation:** The Conference noted that laws governing collective bargaining exclude informal economy workers, most negotiations between the informal workers and employers are informal and the agreements are not fully implemented. Any attempt to extend collective bargaining to informal economy workers should be gender and class sensitive.

We recommend the:

- Inclusion of informal economy workers in existing collective bargaining structures.
- Creation of new statutory collective bargaining forums, such as tripartite boards and multi-partite forums.
- Reform of all existing labour laws for the coverage of all types of informal workers.
- Development of strong organisations of informal workers to pressurise governments for collective bargaining
- Education and training on rights and responsibilities for all actors in the Informal economy.
- Initiatives on the part of global labour organisations like the GUFs, OATUU, WCL, ICFTU to obtain legal recognition for workers' organization in the informal economy.
- Intensification of efforts by all actors in the informal economy to network and engage in social dialogue.

**Social Protection:** Informal economy operators generally lack access to major social protection facilities like national health insurance schemes, maternity benefits, child care and child benefits, pension and employment and income security. They operate under a general absence of Occupational Health and Safety provisions. To ensure that all workers benefit from existing formal social provisions we recommend:

- Networking and lobbying parliamentary groups and policy makers to enact legislation to promote the extension of social protection to the informal economy.
- Collaboration between trade union organizations with similar objectives.
- Urge trade unions to include in their collective bargaining, provisions to cover informal economy workers
- Encourage participation and inclusion of informal workers organizations in social dialogue or negotiations for social protection.
- Develop international cooperation to facilitate the international transfer of pension benefits of informal economy workers.

**Skills Development and Employment Creation:** Funding for training, low formal educational background, access to training opportunities as well as the criteria for selecting members for training are the major challenges constraining access of informal economy workers to the acquisition of employable skills and jobs openings. Formal sector training fails in most instances to provide employable skill in the informal economy. Persons with disabilities are further constrained by their inability to access public structures and facilities which do not provide for their physical challenge.

We recommend:

- Training for decent work and sustainable employment in the informal economy.
- Linking informal economy operators to training institutions.
- Encouraging formal sector training institutions to adapt their training methodologies to suit the needs of informal economy operators, especially women.
- Skills training as a platform for organising informal economy workers.

**Laws and Policies:** Most countries represented have ratified some of the core ILO conventions, and adopted the Convention on the Elimination of all Kinds of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). National constitutions uphold fundamental rights. Not many countries have ratified the conventions on rural workers and homework affecting many informal workers, and almost everywhere the legal status of own account workers remains unclear. Legal provisions that cover informal economy are fragmented, generalised, unclear and not adequately specific to offer the needed protection for all workers and women especially. We therefore recommend:

- Facilitating the enactment of legislation to cover the specific needs of all informal workers.
- Work for the amendment of existing legislation to cover informal economy.
- Ensure that the needs of women located in the informal economy are provided for in all laws and policies specific needs.
- Campaign for the ratification or the adoption of ILO conventions and UN instruments useful to informal workers and work towards the development of new ILO instruments useful for the informal economy.
- Devise methods to pressurise the IMF, World Bank and other international finance institutions to allow governments to implement policies favourable to informal workers.
- Conduct research to identify, document information on best practices on laws, policies and agreements affecting informal workers and develop channels to disseminate findings amongst various countries.
- Develop international tools and materials to enhance the capacity of informal economy operators to effectively engage in policy formulation and negotiations.

The Accra conference further recommends the following International processes to support national efforts:

- i. Governments ensure policy integration on the informal economy in regional and sub-regional economic protocols
- ii. Utilising the affiliation of informal economy organisations to several global unions and international and regional trade union centres for information sharing and international solidarity actions and partnerships
- iii. The working relations between the ILO and the new international confederation of trade unions that will emerge in November be expanded to cover informal economy
- iv. International collaboration in the production of a training manual and exchanging educational materials and personnel amongst trade unions organising in the informal economy

- v. Campaigns for ratification and/or the adoption of ILO conventions and UN instruments useful to informal workers

The conference resolved that the Accra process of combining the collective efforts to organise workers in the informal economy should be sustained by:

1. A third international conference on organizing workers in the informal economy convened in 2009 in Mexico;
2. Regional conferences be held towards international conference in Mexico 2009;
3. The plan to produce a handbook in 2007 as a guide to organisers for organizing in the informal economy to proceed as planned;
4. A trade union educators' forum to be convened for organising in the informal economy, coinciding with the 2007 international congress of IFWEA (International Federation of Workers Education Associations) in 2007 in Ahmedabad, India;
5. All informal economy workers' organizations, trade unions, national trade union centres, global union federations and research institutions, continue networking for the promotion of organization of workers in the informal economy;
6. All participating organisations continue to raise funds for the next conference;
7. That organisations participating in the Accra conference lobby and advocate for these objectives at the Vienna conference to launch a new international trade union confederation in November 2006;
8. The members of the ICC should continue to coordinate activities towards the 2009 Mexico conference.

**Participating Organizations attending the launch of the new Trade Union confederation:**

Afro-ICFTU  
DOAWTU-WCL  
OATUU  
CNTS Senegal  
CROC Mexico  
Ghana TUC  
FNOTNA-CROC  
FNV Netherlands  
Hong Kong CTU  
IFWEA  
SEWA India  
StreetNet International  
TUC of UK  
UNTM Mali  
UNSTB Benin  
USTN Niger

## ANNEX 1

### List of Conference Participants

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### **Summary**

Total number of participants	65 participants
Total organisations	44 + 11 Global Union Federations and support organisations
Total Number of Countries	15 + 8 from Global Union Federations and support organisations

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