

Nothing for us without us!

World class city for ALL!

In March representatives of street vendors and other organisations of the urban poor met to develop a South African World Class Cities for ALL Campaign. StreetNet International Coordinator, **Pat Horn**, explains the campaign demands developed in the context of preparations for the 2010 Soccer World Cup.

It has become a predictable reality that when a country prepares to host a high-profile international event, like the 2010 Soccer World Cup, its local government authorities prepare to create 'World Class Cities' of a particular type. These are World Class Cities which will attract foreign investment, have modern up-to-date infrastructure and no visible signs of urban decay, have smooth traffic flows and show no visible poor people or social problems.

This usually includes the eviction of street vendors and is sometimes accompanied by "slum clearance" programmes where the poorest

members of the population also lose their homes. Many of the newly homeless are also in the informal economy which means that they lose their homes and their livelihoods at the same time. This leaves them with few survival strategies to fall back upon.

The creation of typical 'World Class Cities' usually results in the abandonment or shelving of previous development plans for the poor. On the streets women vendors disappear from public profile as the development plans disappear. This often militarises the struggles of street vendors.

In early March StreetNet International launched a 'World Class Cities for ALL' (WCCA) Campaign to challenge this traditional approach and create a new, more inclusive concept with the participation of street vendors and other groups of the urban poor. It convened a national strategising meeting with campaign partners to develop a South African WCCA campaign strategy for 2007-2010.

The 46 participants were from 24 organisations, including street vendors' organisations, municipal workers' unions and social movements from the Eastern Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and Western Cape.

The campaign is led by StreetNet International. Country-level WCCA structures consisting of local campaign partners will work in support of StreetNet, and be accountable to StreetNet's decision-making structures as well as to their own members.

Regular reports and interaction will flow between country-level WCCA structures and StreetNet structures. This will ensure prominent women leadership (over 50%); a non-sectarian approach to campaign partnerships; the prominence of working-class alliances with no party political affiliation; the interests of the poorest are foremost; the rights of informal workers including street vendors are recognised; and that campaign partners can enjoy the freedom to associate with or withdraw from the campaign if it is done in a transparent manner.

The framework which defines informal workers in this campaign is the "Conclusions on Decent Work and the Informal Economy" adopted by the 90th session of the International Labour Conference of the ILO in June 2002.

At the South African strategising meeting vendor organisations identified a number of common concerns. These included fighting against evictions and unemployment; the lack of legal protection and the perception that their everyday activities are illegal; the lack of basic facilities; the exploitation of informal workers with low insecure poverty incomes; marginalisation and lack of consultation by authorities when they take decisions and policies affecting vendors and uncertainty about 2010 plans in the run-up to the Soccer World Cup.

Out of these concerns the group developed a number of campaign demands. These included the



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organisation of a *National Policy Dialogue* in a public debate between government officials, FIFA World Cup structures, WCCA campaign partners and other representatives of poor and marginalised constituencies. They should discuss ways of ensuring that the FIFA World Cup 2010 is successful and ALL in South Africa enjoy equal opportunities to benefit from it.

Other issues for discussion would be the *inclusion of poor communities and constituencies in decision-making* on all issues that affect them. And the *provision of decent and affordable services* for the poor and workers in the informal economy such as transport, security, water and electricity.

The group also outlined the need to *train enforcement agents* such as the Metro Police about the relationship between their enforcement and spatial regulations, land and property rights and development and livelihood issues of the urban poor.

In addition the group recommended *community participation in the fight against crime* to ensure that crime-fighting initiatives are not side-tracked into police operations against vulnerable groups such as street vendors, foreigners and homeless and landless people at the expense of

effective action to stop the real criminals.

Further, the campaign demands a *moratorium on all evictions* from land, housing or street livelihoods pending negotiations with the elected representatives. The campaign will *support Cosatu's demands for the 2010 World Cup and participate in the 2010 Framework Agreement* which has been presented to Nedlac (National Economic Development and Labour Council) by organised labour as a draft for negotiation.

The group also drew up a set of demands to present to municipalities for negotiation. These included that they formally adopt an inclusive concept of World Class Cities for All with the participation of street vendors and other groups of the urban poor. This should include a strong focus on women and other street vendors who traditionally are the first to lose their livelihoods and have been invisible in previous plans for World Class Cities.

A second demand is that municipalities undertake that any relocation of street vendors, informal market vendors or hawkers prior to urban improvement and renewal initiatives must include acceptable alternatives to even the poorest traders, including women and traders with disabilities.

Municipalities must undertake to engage in social dialogue or negotiations with all potentially affected people or groups wherever urban improvement or renewal initiatives will affect people's livelihoods. They need to set up multi-stakeholder negotiating forums in each city to ensure consultative processes. This needs to be guided by local

government representatives, including policy makers and enforcement agents, and Salga (SA Local Government Association) or provincial local government association representatives.

Street vendors must be represented by their elected representatives, with the representation of women and vendors with disabilities in proportion to their presence on the streets. Street vendors operating as fronts for small or big business, or with conflicts of interest, will not be regarded as *bona fide* representatives. Forum structures must be as inclusive as possible to avoid marginalisation or closed shop situations.

At the meeting vendors expressed a number of expectations of the campaign. These included that municipalities must avoid an increase in harassment and evictions in the lead-up to 2010. They also want to build unity between street vendors so that they can speak with one voice and counter the negative public image about street vendors.

Others at the gathering wanted to explore where they could be most useful in the campaign and to learn more about the situation of street vendors and informal workers. They also wanted to find ways of working together around job creation and eradicating poverty.

Some lively and strong slogans were thought of to drive the World Class City For All Campaign such as World Class Cities for ALL; No relocation without alternatives; Negotiation and social dialogue; Nothing for us without us; and Walala, wasala! (Wake up and stop complaining!).

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