STREETNET PRESENTATION

Social Protection for Migrants in the SADC: Prospects, Vulnerability and Benefits across Borders

StreetNet is an international federation of 52 organisations of street vendors, informal market vendors and hawkers in 46 countries in Africa, the Americas, Asia and Eastern Europe, representing 588 709 paid-up members. StreetNet participated in the Committee on Migrant Workers in the Global Economy in the 92nd session of the Conference in 2004.

In relation to the report of the Director General on migration, StreetNet presented a particular background of migrant workers who experience a high level of marginalization and criminalization on daily basis – and that is informal cross-borders, the majority of whom are women.

These workers face the following challenges:

1. Lack of accessible information on trade protocols;
2. Harassment of women in transit at border posts;
3. Corruption by officials at border posts;
4. Language barriers – so traders are unable to understand legal requirements of trading in other states;
5. Lack of market infrastructure for informal cross border traders;
6. Lack of recognition of the role of women in informal cross-border trade;
7. Lack of policies that address the challenges faced by women;
8. Complicated registration processes for associations of informal cross-border traders;
9. Difficulty in movement of informal cross border traders and their goods;
10. Complicated customs and immigration requirements.

StreetNet wishes to draw attention to the role that governments would need to embrace in implementation of programmes for the establishment of an enabling environment for smooth cross border trade and guaranteed sustainable livelihoods and poverty eradication.

- Simplification of customs documentation, and translation of these documents into national languages.
- Establish Trade Information Desks at border posts;
- Legal reforms that will enable married women to get access to credit facilities;
- Creation of market infrastructures for informal cross border traders at national level;
- Enhance safety and security measures for women at border posts.

StreetNet urges governments to engage in extensive and effective social dialogue with objective of:

- Being fully accountable to their civil society constituents;
- Improving levels of transparency about trade and development decisions;
- Engaging the participation of the most vulnerable workers in the solutions at all levels, including across borders.

Such social dialogue should complement other levels of collective bargaining and social dialogue (i.e. bipartite, tripartite, multi-partite, local, national and international) with all social partners, including organized informal economy workers. StreetNet’s participation in this discussion is in response to the strong message of our members who have been excluded for a long from inclusive policies and processes:

“Nothing for us without us”

THANK YOU