

August 2015

Contact us at WIEGO !

Address :
WIEGO
79 JFK Street #32,
Cambridge, MA 02138 USA
Tel. : 617-496-7037
email : wiego@wiego.org
Web : www.wiego.org
Facebook:
[facebook.com/wiegoglobal](https://www.facebook.com/wiegoglobal)
Twitter: [@wiegoglobal](https://twitter.com/wiegoglobal)

What's going on at WIEGO?

Take a look at our
[recent](#) and [upcoming](#)
events and activities!



Delegates and supporters at
the 104th session of the ILC

Photos by S. Trevino

"We will continue our lobbying,
advocacy & networking with our
government & allies for the adop-
tion & implementation of these
recommendations." - Lourdes
Gula, Patamaba, Philippines

"We hope that the recognition of
this right in an official ILO instru-
ment will assist street vendors &
informal traders throughout the
world to be able to work without
constant harassment & evictions
from their workplaces." - Gladys
Mponda, StreetNet International



WIEGO MBO Newsletter



A Newsletter for Membership-Based Organizations of Informal Workers

GREETINGS FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES!

We hope you enjoy this August 2015 issue of the WIEGO MBO Newsletter. We love to hear from you! If you have questions or comments, or would like to submit content for the next issue, please email us at wiego@wiego.org.

Making our Voices Heard: informal workers at the ILC, June 2015

On Friday, June 12, the International Labour Conference adopted, by an overwhelming majority, the new international labour standard, the *Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204)*.

The Recommendation is premised on providing rights, protection and incentives to the informal workforce, and in making the legal and policy environment more friendly to informal workers. It has three major objectives:

- To facilitate the transition from the informal to the formal economy, while respecting workers' fundamental rights
- To promote the creation of decent jobs
- To prevent the informalization of formal economy jobs

While the Recommendation is not perfect, it provides a leap forward in the struggle of informal workers for recognition, protection and support and a tool for advocacy and negotiation with governments.

Informal workers were there! WIEGO coordinated a group of more than 30 informal worker representatives at the ILC. They worked with trade union allies to ensure their voices were heard and that the issues of most

importance to them were included. These issues were identified in preparatory workshops organized by WIEGO in 2014, and at the first discussion at the ILC in the same year where a similar delegation of informal workers was present (see the [WIEGO Network Platform](#)).

Street vendors, home-based workers, waste pickers and domestic workers were represented. Some had managed to secure places in the official trade union delegations of their countries, while our SEWA sisters were official ITUC delegates. They spoke in workers' groups and plenary sessions as well as at side meetings. They lobbied governments and trade unionists to support our positions. They provided information on issues, and helped prepare arguments for the worker spokesperson. The group worked well together, meeting every morning before the official sessions began to reflect on the previous day and to plan for the day ahead.

But an ILO Recommendation is only of use if it is implemented. As Suntaree from HomeNet South East Asia said in her speech to the plenary session, "*this Recommendation must not remain on paper. It must be implemented, in all countries, at national and local levels.*" To make sure this happened, in their final meeting the group agreed on the following actions:

In our countries:

- Report back on the Recommendation to our organizations
- Prepare a plan on how to take this forward in our countries/sectors
- Follow up with our governments. What are they doing to implement the Recommendation?
- Follow up with Trade Union National Centres and work with them
- Approach ILO country/regional offices for support
- Use the ILO Decent Work Country Programmes
- Record experiences

Together:

- Share plans, information and good practices regularly through WIEGO
- Set up and share information using the [Whats App Group](#) and other social media (WIEGO)

For more information:

- [full text of the recommendation](#) on the [ILO website](#)
- [summary of the recommendation's key points](#) on the [WIEGO website](#)
- [WIEGO-facilitated delegation in action](#)



Participants at WIEGO/ILRIG workshop for women waste pickers in Cape Town.

Photos (above & below) by Anele Silekwa, ILRIG



I am a home-based worker!

WIEGO organized a workshop in Argentina in March 2015 in partnership with Association Lola Mora and CTEP (Confederación de Trabajadores de la Economía Popular). Participants came from various cooperatives and associations around Buenos Aires. They talked about their organizations and the work their members did at home. Many realized for the first time that they and their members were home-based workers.

Argentina is the only country in Latin America that has ratified the Home Work Convention, but there is little awareness of, or support for, home-based workers.

The group agreed to a programme of action including bringing more organizations into the “network” and promoting changes to the law covering homeworkers. A working group will be set up to coordinate activities, in line with the decision of the Action Plan adopted at the Global Conference.

Workshop for women waste pickers

On 26-27 May 2015, 30 women waste pickers assembled at Community House in Salt River Cape Town. They gathered at a workshop facilitated by WIEGO in partnership with the International Labour Research and Information Group (ILRIG) to speak about the challenges and issues that they face as women waste pickers at home, in their workplaces and their organizations, and to explore what needs to change. Ten of the women travelled from cities and towns outside of Cape Town and most of them had never flown or been to Cape Town before. The women belong to the South African Waste Pickers Association (SAWPA) –a national association–and the local Cape Town organization, Siyacoca (which means ‘We are cleaning’ in isiXhosa).

As they shared their experiences through interactive social mapping exercises, the women highlighted the following challenges and issues that they want to address:

- Disrespect from neighbours and family; derogatory name calling, such as “mad woman”
- Sexual harassment as a daily

occurrence experienced on the landfill sites, especially by younger and middle-aged women

- Women can be raped when collecting waste in unsafe areas
- “We have to work with our children on our backs in unhealthy and unsafe conditions simply because we cannot afford childcare”
- Disrespect from local government officials who prefer to hold discussions with the male waste pickers instead of speaking to the women

Ideas discussed among the women of how to address the challenges and issues that they have identified are as follows:

- Unite and form worker cooperatives
- Empower women to speak out against all forms of harassment and stand together to be stronger
- To be recognized as workers and to have access to social protection/benefits such as

maternity leave

The women were inspired by the initiatives that the different groups among them were already taking to organize as women and as waste pickers in their communities. These initiatives include door-to-door membership recruitment and combining their waste material to avoid exploitation from unscrupulous middlemen who want to pay differentiated rates for the same materials in different areas

A highlight of the workshop was watching the recorded message to the group by Madalena Duarte (from the waste pickers’ cooperative in Brazil). The women realized that although they lived continents apart from each other their situation was very similar. They left the workshop determined to persevere and work towards a common goal to ensure their independence as women, to be recognized as workers and to struggle for access to basic social benefits, such as maternity leave. Follow up activities have been planned to take this work forward.

June 16 was International Domestic Workers’ Day! In honor of the day, IDWF (International Domestic Workers Federation) prepared a [map of activities](#) and a [facebook page](#).

Home-based workers adopt the Delhi Declaration at the Global Conference!

The first Global Conference on Home-based Workers was held in New Delhi, India in February 2015. The conference was organized by HomeNet South Asia (HNSA) and WIEGO. Home-based workers, researchers and NGO representatives came from 24 countries to discuss issues that are important to home-based workers. They shared experiences and discussed ways to improve their social and economic situations. The results of the meeting were the Delhi Declaration, the first global declaration of home-based

workers, and a five-year global Action Plan that sets goals for awareness, collaborations and other activities. More information

about the conference is available on the [WIEGO website](#).

