

Grassroots Partner Constituency Group of the General Assembly of Partners
Stakeholder Statement
Habitat III Conference – Quito, Ecuador
October 20, 2016

As co-chairs of the Grassroots Partner Constituency Group of the General Assembly of Partners, the SDI and WIEGO networks thank the United Nations for opening a space for grassroots leaders to participate in the definition of our common future.

The majority of people who work in cities work in the informal economy and live in informal settlements. We are the ones who make our cities work.

Grassroots leaders are the eyes and ears, and the heart and soul of our communities. We feed our families, care for children, solve problems, and nourish relationships with others in the community.

Together, our networks have invested participation in this process so that our voices may be heard. We have done so at great risk, leaving our livelihoods behind in order to represent the women and men who form the majority of workers in a very unequal world: those who lack decent and dignified living and working conditions.

We are here today to share our message:

- Our common future must be grounded in implementable partnerships between organized groups of the grassroots and local and national governments, civil society, and other stakeholders.
- The Quito Implementation Process must recognize and support organized networks of grassroots women, slum dwellers and informal workers who contribute to urban economic growth and build movements towards influencing and enhancing their own development and the cities in which they live.
- We grassroots leaders bring local expertise to the table and these partnerships must be recognized, institutionalized and strengthened with the necessary financial and technical capacity building to ensure that our leaders and our communities are veritable development partners.

Our shared goal is truly inclusive development and cities that work for each and every person; to achieve this, we need incremental formalization and integration of informal workers and settlements into our cities, through processes that protect our existing livelihoods and homes, rather than criminalize the urban poor.

We call on everyone to ensure that the investment in grassroots participation is not lost. Those who work in the informal economy and live in informal settlements are organized and ready to realize their rights to inclusion. But they cannot do so without your support.

Thank you.