

WIEGO calls for an end to forced evictions of informal workers in Accra



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

8 February 2022

GHANA: WIEGO joins the Union of Informal Workers Associations (UNIWA) to call upon the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) in Accra, Ghana to immediately stop, and make remedy for, forced evictions of vendors and informal workers. Thousands of workers in the capital have been targeted under an ongoing campaign conducted under the 'Clean Your Frontage' initiative of the government's 'Make Accra Work' programme. The Accra Regional Minister has committed to clear all trading activities from the streets of Accra and UNIWA and residents report police arresting vendors and dismantling structures.

A detailed WIEGO study to be released this month found that informal workers across sectors in Accra have been experiencing a sustained decline in earnings, an increase in food insecurity, depletion of savings and rising debt since the onset of the COVID-19 crisis in early 2020. Street vendors and street head porters (kayayei) – two key groups targeted by this evictions campaign - are the most affected in terms of earnings loss. Our research found that street vendors' and kayayei's earnings in mid-2021 have fallen by 85% and 80%, respectively. 100% of kayayei surveyed reported experiencing adult hunger in the past year. Unlike several other African countries, the government of Ghana has provided no cash grant relief to informal workers to help them cope with losses.

With workers in crisis and without access to relief, the eviction campaign threatens to destroy the livelihoods of informal workers whose homes and incomes are already under threat.

"Informal workers form the backbone of many of Accra's economy and civic services. Despite deep social stigmas, these mainly female workers provide essential goods and services and play a critical role in preventing food insecurity in Accra. They have no benefits, workplace protections or job stability. Destroying informal workers' livelihoods is unjust, a violation of their fundamental rights, and a harm to the economy as a whole," said Dorcas Ansa, WIEGO Accra Focal Cities Coordinator.

In the coming weeks trade unions, informal worker organisations and allies will accelerate a campaign of peaceful protest and activism to call for an end to violence against informal workers in Accra.

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Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) is a global network focused on empowering the working poor, especially women, in the informal economy to secure their livelihoods. We believe all workers should have equal economic opportunities, rights, protection and voice. WIEGO promotes change by improving statistics and expanding knowledge on the informal economy, building networks and capacity among informal worker organizations and, jointly with the networks and organizations, influencing local, national and international policies. Visit www.wiego.org.



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Editor's Notes:

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