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## **MEDIA ALERT**

### **ATTENTION: EDITORS/JOURNALISTS**

### **RE: INVITATION TO A STREET TRADERS NATIONAL DIALOGUE**

**DATE: 12/06/2008**

Members of the media are invited to a Street Traders National Dialogue that will be held on the 19-20 June 2008 in Johannesburg, Gauteng province.

The Ecumenical Service for Socio-Economic Transformation (ESSET), an ecumenical advocacy agency affiliated to the South African Council of Churches has been requested by informal traders in the inner city of Johannesburg to facilitate a deliberative process between Street traders, government and other stakeholders at national level. This process stems from the dialogues that were held with various civil society organisations in 2006. From these dialogues, the informal traders around the inner city of Johannesburg sought help from ESSET to walk with them in the struggles they encounter in their sector.

Currently there are about 10 000 traders who peddle their goods on the streets of the city. Since they burst the city scape early in the last century, informal traders have attracted much attention, mostly unwelcome from different interest groups. Informal trading has been perceived as unfair competition by mainstream retailer, as obstruction by motorist, unhealthy and obdurate by authorities who blamed them for the decay of the inner city.

In recent years, the city of Johannesburg has tried to reassert its authority by developing mechanisms to regulate the sector whilst cleaning up and regenerating the inner city at the same time, making it more attractive for big business. Hawkers however, experience the measures adopted by the city as harassment, protesting that they impede their legitimate commercial undertaking. Some of the issues of contention are: Law enforcement, Markets, overtrading, and evictions. Such harassments have also been seen in the other parts of the country, Durban, Cape Town, East London etc.

Among issues to be discussed during the National Dialogue includes;

- Creating space for traders to share their experiences at national level.
- Collectively developing strategies for interventions around challenges facing informal traders.
- Find alternatives and proper ways of engagement between government, its implementing subsidiaries and informal traders.
- Find better ways of maximizing the voices of the people in the sector.

**The National Dialogue will be held as follows:**

**Date: 19- 20 June 2008**

**Venue: Booyens Hotel, Johannesburg**

**Time: 10am – 5pm**

**Issued by ESSET Communication Service**

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