

## Work in the Informal Economy/South Africa

As stable public-sector jobs are eliminated through privatizing public services, more women are turning to informal work to survive. In South Africa, as in other countries in Africa, 90 percent of women workers are informal workers: street vendors, home-based garment workers or child care providers in their homes. Their work provides subsistence for their families but is not recognized as formal employment so they have no access to legal protections or benefits.

But women workers in South Africa's informal economy have created a union that meets their needs—the Self-Employed Women's Union (SEWU). The original organizers had roots in the trade union movement. Led by SEWU President

Zodwa Khumalo, a street vendor, they fight for better working conditions and have influenced city governments to regulate street trade, taking into account the social and economic needs of street vendors.

