# Improving pay and working conditions of informal sector workers in Somalia

TUC Aid is supporting the Federation of Somali Trade Unions (FESTU) in its efforts to improve pay and working conditions of informal sector workers in Somalia through a project launched in December 2014.

The initiative funded by TUC Aid consists in conducting a survey of informal sector workers. In addition to the Survey, a two-day workshop on the Challenges of Informal Economy for Trade Unions will be held in Mogadishu to launch the survey report. The workshop will discuss the findings and ways and means of addressing the issues relating to organizing informal economy workers, including the implementation of the recently ratified ILO conventions, labour law reforms, training and education needs and develop an action plan. FESTU and affiliates will lobby relevant authorities on the enactment and effective enforcement of the rights to freedom of association, collective bargaining, and on elimination of discrimination against informal economy workers.

Since the installation of the current government in 2012 with support from the international community, Somalia has enjoyed relative stability. The private sector has played a significant role in developing some key sectors, especially, telecommunications, agriculture, livestock and fisheries. The vast majority of workers – around 94% - are employed in the fast growing informal sector which dominates the Somali economy. Informal sector workers in Somalia include domestic workers, street and market vendors, agricultural workers, day labourers etc. FESTU points out that their working conditions are far from satisfactory, that employers do not pay proper wages and that they do not pay them on a regular basis either. Moreover, the workers are denied leave and often have no access to medical facilities. They are not in a position to form unions or associations and bargain collectively for better working conditions, fair pay and life with dignity.

Somalia has a population of some 10.5m (2014) and is one of the poorest countries in sub-Saharan countries. Per capita income was estimated at US$284 in 2013. 74.5% of the population live in poverty (under US$2 per day), according to UNDP reports. Life expectancy at birth was 55.5 years in 2012.

FESTU was accepted into ITUC membership in December 2014.