



DELHI DECLARATION OF HOME-BASED WORKERS

New Delhi, 9th February, 2015



We, the members of 60 networks, associations and trade unions of home-based workers, together with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and researchers from 24 countries, met in New Delhi on the 8th and 9th of February 2015 at the **Global Conference of Home-based Workers**, jointly organized by HomeNet South Asia (HNSA) and Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO).

The term home-based worker is used to refer to workers who carry out remunerated work within their homes or the surrounding grounds. We note despite often being a significant proportion of the workforce that a large majority of us home-based workers, especially women home-based workers, are denied our rights. The International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention, Home Work Convention, 1996 (No. 177); the Kathmandu Declaration of 2000; and the South Asian Regional Plan of Action for Home-based Workers, 2007, urged the identification and recognition of home-based workers, the mainstreaming of home-based workers into national economies, the formulation of national policies for home-based workers, the integration of home-based workers into national and regional markets; and sought to raise our visibility, voice and concerns.

We declare our commitment to supporting, building and strengthening our organizations and gaining recognition, rights and representative voice. In order to improve our lives, we are committed to extending our networking and to building global solidarity. To start with, we have also committed ourselves to an action plan.

After having deliberated on our work and our concerns, we note the following:

- Despite the ILO Convention 177 on Home Work (1996), the Kathmandu Declaration (2000) and various other agreements, a majority of us, the home-based workers, remain unidentified, invisible, unrecognized, discriminated against, voiceless and denied our rights as workers.
- Home-based work is a global phenomenon, found in countries rich and poor, and exists in all sectors of employment, including manufacturing, services and agro-based and food sectors.
- Home-based work is an important source of employment, especially for economically and socially disadvantaged women. The majority of home-based workers are women: 70 per cent in Brazil; 75 per cent in Pakistan; and 88 per cent in Ghana.
- Many home-based workers may be migrants who are particularly vulnerable.
- We contribute significantly to the national and global economies and are linked to the formal economy through value chains and supply chains and local markets.
- We are not generally incorporated into national and global data collection systems or into development agendas and programmes and, thus, we, our work, our contribution remains invisible and unrecognized.
- We have limited access to social security, skills development opportunities, credit and markets.
- For home-based workers, our homes are also our workplaces. But our homes are often of poor quality, lack basic infrastructure services (such as water, sanitation, drainage).
- We are not home-bound. as we have to buy supplies and sell or deliver goods, and therefore incur expenses due to lack of affordable public transport services.

1. In light of the above, we strongly recommend and support the following:

A) Recognition of the following facts:

- i. That there are two basic categories of home-based workers: those who are self-employed and those who are sub-contracted piece rate workers (called homeworkers). Both categories are impacted by irregular or cancelled work orders and wages, an unreliable supply of raw materials, delayed payments and rejected goods. Moreover, each category of home-based workers have specific challenges that need different types of services and policy support: the self-employed face specific challenges in marketing their products, the sub-contracted face specific challenges in negotiating work orders.

- ii. That the majority of home-based workers are women, and their economic activities contribute significantly to their family income security and to local and national economies. For this and other reasons, home-based workers should be prioritized within poverty reduction and women's empowerment initiatives and programmes of the national and sub-national governments.

B) Formulation and implementation of social protection and labour laws and initiatives, based on decent work principles and workers' rights, so that we can have a life of dignity, free from discrimination, poverty and deprivation by:

- i. Recognizing us, the home-based workers, as workers;
- ii. Extending and enforcing labour laws and protections and implementing other supportive laws and regulations appropriate for both the self-employed home-based workers and the sub-contracted homeworkers. These will include
 - a. The right to fair prices in markets (self-employed), and fair piece-rates (sub-contracted);
 - b. The right to secure, transparent contracts – work orders (sub-contracted) and commercial transactions (self-employed);
 - c. Protection from being subjected to poor quality raw materials, arbitrary cancellation of work orders, arbitrary rejection of goods, or delayed payments (both groups but especially sub-contracted);
 - d. The right to labour inspection and complaint resolution mechanisms.
- iii. Supporting our organizations and networks to achieve legal/formal status to enhance access to government and non-governmental services and benefits.

C) Systematic collection of data on number of home-based workers and our contribution to national economies by:

- i. Adopting of the official international statistical definition of “home-based workers” in national labour surveys and censuses or other national data collection systems;
- ii. Ensuring that national Labour force surveys include a question on “place of work”;
- iii. Promoting efforts to measure our contribution to the local economy (cities and villages) as well as national economy and exports.

D) Recognition of rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining by:

- i. Recognizing and supporting strong and vibrant member-based organizations and networks of home-based workers (as per ILO Convention 87);
- ii. Ensuring our participation and voice in the formulation of policies and in monitoring implementation;
- iii. Promoting collective bargaining and formal collective agreements with employers and/or with governments (as per ILO Convention 98).

E) Building better and inclusive markets by:

- i. Investing in skill and technology upgradation and product design and development;
- ii. Promoting financial inclusion including access to bank accounts, savings and affordable credit;
- iii. Undertaking trade promotion measures specific to our products, as a part of the mainstream initiatives and ensuring our participation in local and national government strategies and plans for designing and managing markets meant for home-based workers' products;
- iv. Facilitating research on sector-specific home-based work, with a special focus on women home-based workers in the value chain of production.

F) Formulation of effective local and national policies on home-based workers:

- i. Which will be developed with our participation;
- ii. Which will ensure that adequate budget allocations are in place;
- iii. And, which will include the following, at least:
 - a. Upgrading of the homes of home-based workers which are also their workplaces;
 - b. Minimum wages, fair piece-rates and annual bonuses for homeworkers;
 - c. Skill development (including re-skilling for alternative employment) and appropriate literacy programmes, including financial literacy;
 - d. Social protection, including occupational health and safety;
 - e. Access to credit and livelihood development programmes;

- f. Access to market and economic resources;
- g. Support for children's education, especially girls' education, to ensure that they attend school and are not exploited as child labourers;
- h. Combating of all forms of forced labour, child labour, discrimination and violence based on gender, race, ethnicity or caste groups.

G) Extending social protection schemes and interventions to home-based workers, which will:

- i. Ensure affordable and accessible social protection floors, according to ILO Recommendation R 202, which was almost unanimously adopted in 2012 comprising five essential components: child care, maternity benefits, health insurance, old age and disability pensions;
- ii. Make occupational safety and health an integral component of social protection.

H) Provision of essential urban infrastructure services to home-based workers by:

- i. Improving access to basic infrastructure services to upgrade the home as a workplace;
- ii. Establishing appropriate zoning regulations, allowing for selected commercial activities in residential areas, by residents;
- iii. Providing adequate and accessible transport services for home-based workers, especially for women home-based workers and their raw materials and finished goods;
- iv. Providing good quality, low-cost housing schemes that target home-based workers.

I) Ratification of ILO Home Work Convention, 1996 (No. 177):

- i. Advocate for ratification of Convention 177 by all governments as an essential step towards full recognition and empowerment of home-based workers.

2. We therefore urge:

Organizations of home-based workers and supportive NGOs to raise awareness amongst home-based workers about their status as workers and contributors to the economy; extend their reach nationally and across regions; build global solidarity; raise awareness and advocate for the rights of home-based workers; and ensure access to services, markets and social protection and work towards their empowerment.

Trade Unions to reach out to home-based workers, to include them as members as well as help them to build their own organizations and to advocate for ratification of the ILO Convention No. 177.

The private sector and employers to recognize the existence of home-based workers in value chains and to ensure fair income and social protection; to contribute towards building the capacity and skills of home-based workers; and to facilitate them to move up in the value chain of production in accordance with universally accepted global codes of conduct.

National Governments to recognize the contribution of home-based workers to their family income security and to local and national economies and therefore to prioritize them within poverty reduction and women's empowerment initiatives, to formulate and ensure implementation of national laws and policies for home-based workers, ratify ILO Convention No. 177, include home-based workers in national statistics, facilitate more inclusive markets, recognize home-based worker organizations and networks, encourage collective bargaining and social dialogue and give home-based workers a voice in decisions that affect us.

Regional inter-governmental bodies to recognize the importance of home-based workers as contributors to national economies and to growth, and to address their concerns and give an impetus for their empowerment which would substantially reduce poverty.

International development agencies to recognize home-based workers and include the rights and concerns of home-based workers in their policies and programmes; to support organizations and regional networks of home-based workers to combat exploitation and counter the negative effects of globalization; and support the enforcement of Global Codes of Conduct that put pressure on large corporate buyers to improve conditions of employment for home-based workers.