

**Kathmandu Declaration on women workers in the informal sector,
particularly home-based workers**

The South Asian Regional Meeting on Women Workers in the Informal Sector: Creating an Enabling Environment, with participation by the Governments of India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and by trade unions, nongovernmental organisations, relevant UN and international organisations from these countries, and Bangladesh, having met in Kathmandu on 18-20 October 2000 and having deliberated on the issues, hereby resolve as follows:

Whereas, women workers in the informal sector, unorganised and agro-based sectors contribute significantly to the economic development of their respective countries, and acknowledging that home-based work has been growing rapidly world-wide due to globalisation and liberalisation, particularly in South Asia,

And whereas available evidence suggest that home-based work is an important source of employment especially for economically disadvantaged women,

And noting that there are at least 50 million home-based workers in South Asia of whom around 80 percent are women, who carry out remunerative production and services in their own homes and include own account or self employed workers as well as those who do work for contractors or employers at the piece-rates,

And whereas such workers contribute significantly to the National Economy, these workers are mostly illiterate, invisible, unrepresented and voiceless, and are not generally incorporated in the National Development agendas.

Therefore, in order to bring these home-based workers into the national economic mainstream in accordance with the ILO Convention no.177, this meeting recommends:

A. Formulation of a National Policy and a Plan of Action on Home-based Workers by the Government of the South Asian Region in consultation with the stakeholders, with the following components:

1. Minimum protection, which would include right to organise, minimum remuneration, occupational health and safety, statutory social protection, maternity, child-care, skill development and literacy programmes.
2. Access to markets and economic resources including raw materials, marketing infrastructure, technology, credit and information.
3. Set up Social Funds for home-based workers, which would provide insurance against risks of illness, death, old age, accidents, loss of livelihood assets and contingencies as locally required.
4. Incorporate into official statistics baseline data regarding various categories of worker in the informal sector and in particular home-based workers and their contribution to national economies.

B. Urges SAARC to address the issues of home-based workers in the region and take measures to enable them to deal with the risks and opportunities of globalisation by:

1. Setting up a Technical Committee for informal sector workers and home-based workers to promote:
 - National Policies
 - Bilateral Co-operation
 - Regional Co-operation
2. Promote increased integration of markets at the regional level so as to create more employment opportunities.

3. Include home-based products in the SAFTA priority list.

[From <http://www.wiego.org/publications/Chen%20and%20Carr-homebased%20workers%20in%20South%20Asia-enabling%20environment.pdf>]