

**REPORT OF THE SECOND ADVISORY BOARD**  
**MEETING OF**  
**HOMENET SOUTH ASIA**  
**11th and 12th May 2017, Kathmandu, Nepal**



The Second Advisory Board Meeting of HomeNet South Asia (HNSA) was held on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of May, 2017, in Kathmandu, Nepal. The participant list is at Annexe 1 and the agenda at Annexe 2.

### **Session 1: Inaugural and Presentation of HNSA's Report For 2016 – 2017**

**Chandni Joshi, the Enforcer of HNSA**, welcomed the gathering of participants and presented a brief overview on the journey of the organisation through the years. She highlighted the role the organisation in its nascent years, including, its efforts in mapping, organising and networking. She concluded her introduction by saying that HNSA was neither a process nor a programme, it was a movement. She then invited the participants to introduce themselves.

After the introductions, Ms Chandni Joshi paid rich tributes to the **late Nigar Ahmed**, the founder of Aurat Foundation - Pakistan. She highlighted her achievements and her humanity. Her tribute was followed by a short film, put together by the Aurat Foundation that honoured their beloved founder.

**Renana Jhabvala, Chairperson of HNSA**, thereafter also paid her tribute to Nigar ji. She recalled the words of SEWA's founder – Ms. Ela Bhatt. Ela ben had shared that it took five years to run a project, ten to build an organisation, and 20 years to start a movement. Ms Jhabvala stated that she hoped that HNSA would transform into a movement in the coming years. She set the tone of the meeting and traced HNSA's origins to the days following the Kathmandu Declaration. She said that the present gathering would be instrumental in crafting HNSA's future. She urged them to contribute, during the course of the meeting, to creating a vision and goals for HNSA.

With this, she invited **Janhavi Dave, HNSA's International Co-Ordinator**, to present **HNSA's report for 2016 – 2017** (Annexe 3).

Ms Dave began by thanking the gathering for the warm welcome and their support over the last year. She then highlighted the activities that sought to achieve the objectives that were laid out in the previous advisory meeting. These included:

1. To enhance HNSA's visibility and that of HBWs and to promote action. This would be achieved through:
  - a. Developing information material
  - b. Focus on global supply chains and workers
  - c. Celebration of Days
  - d. Develop and maintain a robust mailing list
  - e. Information, Communication and Decimation
2. Programming to further the cause of Home Based Workers. This would be achieved through:
  - a. Development of short documents used for fund raising
  - b. Develop proposals around Sustainable Development Goals
  - c. Develop information materials
  - d. Compile and extract data on Home-Based Workers in Maldives, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan
  - e. Ongoing Projects
3. To Strengthen HNSA as a network. This would be achieved through:

- a. Capacity building of the team
- b. Trustee/Advisory Board Meetings
- c. Expansion of membership and networking

Under each of the headings, Ms Dave put forth the achievements of HNSA. Simultaneously, she also invited the members to share their achievements with regard to each of the goals. All these have been compiled in Annexe 3. Here are few of the major achievements:

1. HNSA held the first ever global conference of home-based workers – ‘Celebrating Home Based Workers: Twenty Years And Time For Action’. The conference saw the participation of 26 organisations from 11 countries.
2. In Pakistan, the Punjab Policy for Home-Based Workers as well as the Sindh Policy for HBWs has been approved, due to the efforts of HomeNet Pakistan, HBWWF and other members.
3. CLASS Nepal is working closely with the country’s Labour Ministry to bring statistical visibility to the workers.
4. In Bangladesh, a joint action platform has been formed for home-based workers to work with the Government.

At the end of the session, some of the points raised by the participants are given below:

- **Laila Azhar** (HomeNet Pakistan): She raised the question on the status of registration at EcoSoc. She opined that HNSA’s registration with EcoSoc would pave the way for home-based worker representation in U.N. Forums. The biggest advantage would be that HNSA would become a part of the Global Women’s Movement and would be included in all of EcoSoc’s publications / events. It was also felt that a membership would mean far less financial implications (that are incurred while participating in their conferences).
- **Chandni Joshi** (HNSA): An EcoSoc membership will be useful and participation, in UN conferences, will benefit HNSA. However, there needs to be a plan of action and funding needs to be secured in advance.
- **Suvekchya Rana** (SAATHI): She spoke about her recent experience at the CSW and said that she was disappointed that there was no mention of home-based workers or their issues during the event.

## **Session 2: Domestic And Global Supply Chain (Annexe 4 and 5)**

The second session was **chaired by Ms Samina Khan (Sabah Pakistan)** who invited **Ms Firoza Mehrotra (HNSA) and Ms Shalini Sinha (WIEGO)** to present their report – Working in the Shadows. Ms Mehrotra opened by saying that the study of women, home-based workers in global supply chains was triggered by the need for data for advocacy at the recent ILC 2016 that focussed on decent work for home-workers. She recalled that during the first Advisory Board Meeting it was decided that global supply chain studies would be undertaken in at least five of the member countries so that the data would help convince global brands of the presence of home-workers in their supply chains.

After providing a brief recap of the definition of home-based workers and presenting recent statistics on HBWs across South Asian countries, Ms Mehrotra informed the gathering the locations chosen to for the Supply Chain study. The study was conducted in Tirupur (India), Delhi (India), and Kathmandu (Nepal)

Ms Mehrotra, then, detailed the methodology, challenges, and profiles of the companies and respondents. All these have been detailed in their presentation at Annexe 4. It also shares the products made by the companies (ex: T shirts, bermudas, jackets, accessories, and knitted clothing) and the work done by home workers (ex: stitching buttons, trimming, folding, packing, and knitting). Following this, the study's main findings were presented:

1. Across the locations, the rate for each piece produced was between \$0.01 – 0.65
2. The average monthly income was NPR 4200 in Kathmandu and between INR 2100 and 6000 in India
3. Home workers often bore the costs and risks of production
4. They are invisible and the last link in global supply chains, that often span several countries
5. They are isolated and heavily dependent on the contractors
6. Their earnings were meagre and many of them were the bread winners in their families
7. Social security was absent

To improve the status of women, home workers, the study suggested that organisations work towards bringing them more visibility in global forums, undertake more research on supply chains, encourage organising efforts, and adopt and implement Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) guidelines for home work.

Next, **Mr John Henry, the Programme Director, of Social Awareness And Voluntary Education (SAVE)** made his presentation which is at Annexe 5. Mr Henry started with an overview of the organisation that works extensively with home workers in Tirupur, said to be the 'T' Shirt Capital of India. He stated that the town's booming textile processing and knitting industry employed over 5,00,000 people. Of these, 3,00,000 were home-based workers. The HBWs are involved in areas like stitching of rib neck, trimming, labelling, foam removing, packing, identifying damaged goods, waste separation and many more.

He stated that the export houses, based in Tirupur, had crafted a supply chain strategy that was aimed at helping them achieve better market positions, aiding smooth operations, and to continuously attract new clients from around the globe. The strategy also aimed at increasing productivity while cutting down operational costs. He then illustrated two supply chains and pointed out where HBWs came into play. He, then, went on to outline the problems that HBWs faced:

1. They were heavily dependent on factories / contractors for work
2. There was little or no knowledge of the benefits of collective bargaining nor the freedom of association
3. No access to social welfare measures
4. Children are sometimes part of the workforce since home-based units often involved entire families, but SAVE works to eliminate child labour.
5. Payments were delayed and uncertain
6. There's a high demand for quick deliveries

Mr Henry concluded his presentation by pointing out that SAVE's work in areas like organising, training, advocacy and lobbying has helped HWs improve their lives. Today, he said, the women have a greater representation in wage negotiations, they are aware of the social welfare schemes available, and are able to advocate for their rights with the local government and trade unions.

After this, the floor was opened for a discussion on the topic:

Ms Mehrotra started off by requesting the gathering to share what they thought HNSA and its partner organisations should do to improve the status of HWs in domestic and global supply chains – especially in the coming year.

1. **Laila Azhar:** She said that ILO had recently conducted a study on the informality in the global supply chain (garment and textile industry) and the findings of that study could help HBW organisations in Pakistan. She also said that HomeNet Pakistan had also been a part of a global study, spanning 22 countries that traced global supply chains. And that the informal sector had been included in this study. The study had provided an overview of the supply chains in Faisalabad, Lahore, and Sialkot. She said that HomeNet Pakistan would approach the academia, with the report, and urge them to take on supply chain research. This, she said, would generate evidence on the presence of HWs in supply chains. They would also focus on bringing about recognition, improving occupational health, and ensuring minimum wages. She suggested that HNSA create policy briefs centred on global supply chains in the coming year. She also said that there was a need to work closely with the business associations.
2. **Sristi Joshi Malla**(SABAH Nepal): Ms Malla shared her experience with global supply chains and SABAH Nepal. She stated that the organisation has been instrumental in helping HWs progress rapidly through the supply chain ladder. This she said had been achieved by training women in a dying tradition like Dhaka weaving. By making Dhaka fashionable again, SABAH Nepal has helped to revive the tradition and has involved HWs in all steps of production. SABAH Nepal, she said, has also been instrumental in creating end-to-end value chains (like in the case of production of Yomari, a traditional sweet) and had also created successful brands (tea brands and soaps). She pointed out that climbing up the value chain helped women build their confidence. She suggested that introducing HWs to newer technologies would not just help them cut down the drudgery but would help improve productivity and incomes. Helping HBWs gain access to renewable sources of energy, she said, would also help them.
3. **AR Chowdary Repon** (Labour at Informal Economy): He said that in the case of Bangladesh, they had conducted a supply chain study in 2016. The survey covered 15 areas and he stated that the findings were similar to that of the Working in the Shadows study (presented by Ms Mehrotra). But there had been one prominent change in how export houses dealt with HWs after the Rana Plaza tragedy in 2013. While previously, HWs were expected to take the raw material home and churn out the goods, they are now provided with small areas in the export houses' factory or complex, to work. He said that in the future, organising would play a key role in ensuring HWs their rights in global supply chains. He also said that expanding the knowledge base and undertaking continuous studies would help us reach our goals. Mr Repon stated that a knowledge-sharing platform would be useful in addressing concerns. He also said that creating job security was important so that HWs could participate in surveys and studies freely. Finally, he said that HBWs organisations needed to work with brands and Governments to ensure that the lives of workers were considerably improved.
4. **Shakeela Khan**(HBWWF): International brands pay very little to HWs. She mentioned the recent case of Nike where the brand was paying only PKR 20 for

sewing a dozen pockets but after negotiating with them and showing them the low wages given to HWS, the price was brought up to PKR 10 per pocket. They are now looking to map the supply chain for H&M. The organisation has also been in talks with the Government to fix the per piece rate for home-based workers.

5. **Prabha Pokrel** (HBWCSN): The question put forth by most brands is, “Where is the data?” Without this, they refuse to acknowledge the presence of HBWs in their supply chains. This is why there is a need to have five-year plans for data collection and also set annual milestones. In the ILC forum, that she attended, she said that there were so many contradictory data reports that were produced. Some studies emphasised that informal workers were only benefitting from the presence of global supply chains in their countries and that they were not being exploited. Since HNSA and its network is a leading voice in this sphere, it should work towards collecting credible data. We should also work with the Government to push for HBW –friendly policies. We also need a comparison of what prices a HBW is receiving and what the final product price is. This will show the disparity and determine how little they are paid.
6. **Shalini Sinha**(WIEGO): We need to make a clear distinction between home-based work and *kharkana* work in the garments and textiles industry. Second, there are several regulatory mechanisms which work as codes in the industry. HNSA could take cognizance of these and have a position on them.
7. **Samina Khan**(SABAH Nepal): With our efforts over the past decades, in many instances, the home-based worker has now become the intermediary. However, we need to ensure that the HBWs, who function as intermediaries, too do not exploit those under them. There needs to be a mechanism that averts that. We also need to take in to consideration the taxation study that was conducted in Pakistan recently.

Finally, Janhavi Dave asked the gathering to list the global brands that had a supply chain presence in their countries:

Nepal: Stitch by Stitch, brands from Denmark and Japan

Pakistan: H&M, Nike, Adidas, and Zara

Bangladesh: As of now we are not entirely aware of which brands are present in Bangladesh.

With this the session concluded.

### **Session 3: Emerging New Challenges (Annexe 6 and 7)**

**Chaired by Ms Chandni Joshi**, the third session began with a round of introductions. Dr. Madhuri Singh (Founder of SAATHI – a Nepal-based organisation that works to protect women against gender-based violence), Ms Bandana Rana (CEDAW Committee Member and women’s rights activist), and Dr. Bimala Rai Paudyal (an expert in public policy making and a former member of Nepal’s National Planning Commission) were introduced to the participants.

After this, **Dr. Madhuri Singh** took over the platform and presented her views on ‘**Violence Against Women: Emerging Challenges And Cost Of Violence**’ (Annexe 6). She began by outlining the definition of Gender-Based Violence (GBV). She said that GBV encompasses all forms of violence that are related to social expectations and social positions

based on gender. As well as, violence that arises from not conforming to a socially-accepted gender-role. She then outlined the types and context of Gender-Based Violence.

Dr. Singh then explained the concept of Violence Against Women (VAW). And shared the UN definition of VAW and what it encompasses. Additionally, she also presented key facts regarding VAW. These included global estimates that point out that 1 in 3 women (35% of the population) have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime. The fact sheet also stated that domestic violence was the most common form of gender-based violence. Dr. Singh also highlighted key facts and figures with regards to domestic violence (detailed in Annexe 6).

Dr. Singh delved into the social, psychological, and economic impact of VAW. She said that women were afforded sympathy when they were victims of violence, but they rarely received support to overcome the violence. Societal norms are often given precedence over implementation of laws; women rarely had control over finances, and they were often isolated and neglected when they reported violence. Dr. Singh also shared the emerging trends in VAW, including, globalization, political instability, cyber-crimes, and trafficking. She also stated that lack of awareness and advocacy had also contributed to VAW.

She said that it was important to acknowledge the cost of violence and:

1. Foster an understanding that VAW is not a “domestic issue” but a human rights and development issue
2. Highlight budgetary gaps in addressing VAW
3. Facilitate enhanced coordination across sectors to prevent and respond to VAW
4. Support efforts to strengthen implementation of VAW laws and policies

She concluded with the challenges that arise when dealing with VAW and then shared positive stories where economic empowerment, societal and legal support had helped women overcome violence and the stigma attached to it.

The next presentation was by **Bandana Rana, CEDAW Committee Member, who spoke on Current Trends and Dialogues: CSW and CEDAW**

Ms Rana outlined her experience with the Commission of Status of Women (CSW). She stated that it was important to co-ordinate with the working groups and get the language across in the preparation documents. After which, it was important to strategies and lobby well, at the CSW itself, to ensure that the Agreed Conclusions were favourable and reflect our view point. Finally, it was important to come back and engage with the Government so that national policies include what had been agreed upon at the CSW. Gradually, she said, organisations should work towards being a part of the Government delegations itself to ensure lasting change.

Ms Rana stated that there was an undeniable nexus between violence and women home-based workers. She said that while there was no talk of women home-based workers in the recently concluded CSW, there were a few gains. The theme of CSW was Women Economic Empowerment in the Changing World of Work. These are the positives that are emerged:

1. Reconfirmation that women’s economic empowerment is essential for both the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, which

will make a crucial contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to women's economic empowerment.

2. Commitment of all stakeholders to creating an ecosystem of strategic enablers that would bring about a feminist transformation for women's full, equal, and effective participation, leadership, and economic empowerment in the changing world of work.
3. Importance of implementing economic and social policies for women's economic empowerment.
4. The need to address the growing informality of work and mobility of women workers
5. The fact that managing technological and digital change for women's economic empowerment is critical
6. The centrality of strengthening women's collective voice, leadership and decision making
7. The need to strengthen private sector's role in women's economic empowerment
8. The essentiality of women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work was deemed vital in the achievement of the 2030 SDGs.
9. The transition from informal to formal and decent work, being crucial. The Commission committed member states to facilitate the transition of informal workers, including those in home-based work, to the formal economy and ensure equal access to decent work and full and productive employment and to social protection systems.
10. Promoting safe working conditions and equal pay for work of equal value was emphasized.
11. Equal sharing of responsibilities of women and men was a necessity.
12. The nexus between women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work and women's fundamental right to freedom from violence was acknowledged.
13. The commission also adopted the first ever resolution on workplace, sexual harassment.
14. The affirmation of reproductive health and reproductive rights to the contribution of women's economic rights and empowerment.

Following this, Ms Rana shared her views on how to use these Agreed Conclusions. She recommended the following;

1. Disseminate widely the Agreed Conclusions of the 61<sup>st</sup> CSW particularly those that are relevant to HBWs
2. Share and build knowledge among the organisations and workers
3. Advocate strongly to support the implementation of these Agreed Conclusions
4. Contribute to strengthening the data and knowledge hub.
5. Build accountability and engage in advocacy campaigns on equal pay
6. Mobilise the U.N. systems at the national level

Ms Rana concluded her presentation on CSW by emphasising its importance both at the national and international level. She then moved on to speaking about CEDAW. She outlined the articles that are part of the Core Provisions of CEDAW and highlighted the most relevant to economic empowerment:

1. **Article 3** requires states parties to guarantee basic human rights and fundamental freedoms to women "on a basis of equality with men" through the "political, social, economic, and cultural fields."
2. **Article 11** outlines the right to work for women as "an unalienable right of all human beings." It requires equal pay for equal work, the right to social security, paid leave

and maternity leave "with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances." Dismissal on the grounds of maternity, pregnancy or status of marriage shall be prohibited with sanction

3. **Article 13** guarantees equality to women "in economic and social life," especially with respect to "the right to family benefits, the right to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit, and the right to participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life."
4. **Article 14** provides protections for rural women and their special problems, ensuring the right of women to participate in development programs, "to have access to adequate health care facilities," "to participate in all community activities," "to have access to agricultural credit" and "to enjoy adequate living conditions."

She concluded by saying that it was possible for organisations to highlight the concerns of HBWs through CEDAW official as well as Shadow Reports and that as a member of the CEDAW Committee, she would be willing to help shine a light on the issues faced by HBWs and seek attention to addressing them.

### **Dr. Bimala Rai Paudyal, next presented on Sustainable Development Goals** (Annexe 7)

Dr. Paudyal stated that she would shed light on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their relevance to HBWs. She stated that SDGs are a new, universal set of goals, targets and indicators to frame national agendas and development plans/activities over the next 15 years till 2030. She then shared what the 17 goals are.

Dr. Paudyal shared that the HBWs already contributed immensely to meeting SDGs, including through the following goals which are also of direct and indirect relevance to issues of HBWs:

SDG 1 – Ending Poverty

SDG 2 – Ending Hunger

SDG 3 – Ensuring Healthy Lives

SDG 4 - Inclusive equitable education

SDG 5 – Gender Equality

SDG 8 - Inclusive growth, Productive employment and decent work

SDG 9 - Inclusive and sustainable industrialization

SDG 10 – Reduce Inequality

SDG 13 – Combat climate change

SDG 16 - Promote peaceful and inclusive societies

SDG 17 - Strengthen Means of implementation and global partnership

In turn, Dr. Paudyal outlined how Home-Based Workers can benefit from SDGs and pointed out a few of the specific indicators that are most relevant to them:

1. Under SDG 1
  - a. Nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all
  - b. Have equal rights to economic resources
  - c. Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels to support accelerated investment
2. Under SDG 3
  - a. Reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination
  - b. Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks
3. Under SDG 5 – All targets are relevant
4. Under SDG 7
  - a. Universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services
  - b. Facilitate access to clean energy research and technology, including renewable energy, energy efficiency
  - c. Expand infrastructure and upgrade technology for supplying modern and sustainable energy services

She said that the list could go on and it was important for organisations to mainstream issues of HBWs in national policies, plans, and processes. She concluded her presentation by saying that it was important to highlight that HBWs were not just beneficiaries of SDGs-related policies but also contributed to the achievement of the SDGs.

After this, a discussion ensued, the key inputs were:

1. **Renana Jhabvala** (HNSA): How do we best use CSWs? How do we combine violence against women and women's economic empowerment to achieve our goals?
2. **Sristi Malla Joshi**: HNSA can implement a study in Nepal on the issue of violence among HBWs and study if economic empowerment has helped reduce violence.
3. **Laila Azhar**: How do we collect data, on informal workers, that is accepted by the Government? Who do you think should collect this data? In terms of VAW, is there any empirical evidence that explores the relationship between violence and women's economic empowerment?
4. **Bandana Rana**: For the CSWs, you have to prepare a proper plan especially if you are a first-timer. Initially, CSW will provide a platform for you to network but you will not create an impact. Go through an organisation or a network that will aid you in deciphering the CSW in terms of your thematic area. You can also host events where you highlight the issues and stories of home-based workers. These can be done in collaboration with your national government and U.N. agencies. Or you can organise a side event where you invite other civil society organisations, that preferably do not belong to your country, to participate. This, however, will need extensive advertising, planning and resources. This will be a great way to showcase to the rest of the world and highlight your work. It will also strengthen the network. It will also provide an opportunity to learn lobbying techniques, which are so important for us.
5. **Dr. Madhuri**: Since violence largely affects women, it has to be said that their economic empowerment goes a long way in encouraging them to say no to violence. But there are also other factors that come into play. Societal pressure and family support play a key role in women saying no to violence. There has been progress but there is no overwhelming evidence that suggests that women who are economically sound will not endure violence. In fact, it is seen that women from the lower-income groups speak more openly about violence they face than the educated society. And we

have seen when women are transitioning, and are breaking the norms of society, they are more susceptible to violence. Also, in terms of cost of violence, there are not many studies yet on how violence individually affects women economically.

6. **Dr. Bimala:** The problem with Government data is that civil society does not trust the Government data. Similarly, the data collected by civil society does not earn the Government's trust. But for policy, it is always the Government data that is used. But what we have done in Nepal is, for the SDG goals, we formed committees that were headed by members of the Government. It was supported by members of the civil society. We collected data by collectively agreeing on the methodology.

#### **Session 4: Advocacy for Home-Based Workers (Annexe 8)**

In the final session for Day 1, **Ms Ume Laila Azhar, from HomeNet Pakistan**, was invited to speak on advocacy for home-based workers. Since two regions in Pakistan – Sindh and Punjab – have approved policies for home-based workers it was apt that Ms Azhar shares their experience in pushing for the realisation of the policy.

Ms Azhar stated that the work towards getting a policy passed began as early as 2007. Soon, the Government of Pakistan (GoP) Federal Commitments between 2008 – 2011 began reflecting the progress made. In 2011, a policy draft for HBWs was finalised. After this, organisations began pushing for the policy through advocacy and lobbying efforts, organising, strengthening, and ensuring inclusion. This led to some gains, for example, in 2012 the HBWs policy was included in the CM's women empowerment package in Punjab. While this was approved in the 2013, HBW organisations continued to work on drafting an exclusive policy for home-based workers.

Between 2013 and 2017, the strategy has been to build and strengthen HBWs' voices for advocacy, strengthening district based citizen groups and line departments, and advocacy with political leadership. The organisation also put together research work for evidence, conducted analysis of budgets and sought inclusion of informal work, promoted their cause with the media, and focussed on building leadership. This led to the formal approval of both the Punjab and Sindh Home-based Workers Policy in both these provinces, in 2016 Ms Azhar concluded her presentation by saying that they hoped that they would achieve the same in the Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa regions soon.

After her presentation, a discussion on the topic ensued. The key inputs were:

1. **Samina Khan:** For a long time trade unions and worker's federations refused to acknowledge home-based workers. But when they did, they had an established relationship with the Labour Department that HomeNet Pakistan could leverage. Also, home-based workers themselves interacted with Government representatives. And when they heard them, they were convinced to pass the policy.

#### **Day 2 – 12<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

#### **Session 5: Housing and Basic Infrastructure**

The first session of the second day was chaired by Mr Karma T Dorji (SABAH Bhutan). He invited Bijal Bhatt from Mahila Housing Sewa Trust (MHT) to present her views on Housing and Basic Infrastructure and the Home Based Worker (Annexe 8).

Ms Bhatt began the presentation by sharing a brief overview on the Mahila Housing Sewa Trust (MHT) and their vision and mission. She then highlighted a few key statistics. In India, water-related diseases cost the economy 73 million each year. She then outlined the Parivartan Project, undertaken by MHT, aimed at transforming a locality in Gujarat. The project saw the introduction of better housing and basic infrastructure in the settlement. These were the major direct and indirect benefits of the project:

1. The number of school going children increased and this, in turn, increased the literacy levels of the community as a whole, since there was less absenteeism due to illness.
2. Productivity of women increased by an hour at least, every day.
3. 96% of the settlement dwellers starting bathing daily after project Parivarthan, as compared to 74% earlier.
4. 19% of the people reported illness before Parivartan, which had reduced to 7% after Parivartan.

Ms Bhatt then put forth the issues and challenges that a project like Parivarthan entails, these included:

1. Slum upgradation and housing programmes are implemented on a settlement basis so home based workers have to build coalitions with other slum dwellers.
2. Policy workers understand loss of livelihoods due to the distance from workplace, but do not accept that the home is the workplace.
3. There is no focus on designing houses to accommodate work spaces.

With this she concluded her presentation.

**Presentation 2:** Relationship between Access to Basic Infrastructure and Productivity of Home-Based Workers, Case of ROAD, Bhubaneswar by Janhavi Dave, HNSA

The second presentation was a case study that was undertaken as part of the Inclusive Cities Project. Implemented by an organisation called ROAD, (HNSA, WIEGO and MHT were all involved in this initiative), the project brought about interventions in basic infrastructure, including, water, solid waste management, and drainage. These were introduced in two settlements in Bhubaneswar – Jharnasahi and Shantipally.

These were the major impacts of the project:

In Jharnasahi, there were 139 households. Women usually took up jobs as construction workers or packed turmeric or were garment workers. In the settlement, there was a lack of individual water taps and solid waste management. These are the changes brought about by the project:

1. When individual taps were installed, 90% respondents spent the time saved in packing turmeric and earned an additional USD 3 to 6 per month.
2. 5% respondents took additional construction work and earned an additional USD 15-22 per month.
3. 5% respondents spent the time saved in childcare
4. With regards to solid waste management, dustbins were installed and garbage collectors came in every day.
5. This helped to reduce illness
6. Reduction in health expenditure to USD 1.5 to 2 per month.

In Shantipally, there were 1,100 settlements. The women HBWs were involved in incense stick making, snack making, and were garment workers. The infrastructure issues here were of lack of drainage systems and solid waste management. The impacts were:

1. Drainage systems were put in place and residents saw that there was no more water stagnation.
2. Additional income of USD 45 to 270 per annum.
3. Reduction in the cases of illness
4. With regards to solid waste management, one large dustbin was installed and garbage collectors came by every day.
5. This helped to reduce illness
6. There was also a Reduction in monthly health expense to USD 1.5 to 3 per month.

The major learnings were:

1. Home is also the workplace for home-based workers
2. Access to basic services increases the productivity of home-based workers
3. Access to basic services improves the health of the woman as well as her family (reduced health expenditure)

With this the presentation was concluded and a discussion followed. Here are the key inputs:

1. **Shalini Sinha:** One, the quality of housing or the lack of the security of housing or high rentals have an impact on home-based workers. So advocacy efforts and negotiation partners need to highlight this. This message needs to be communicated clearly to the Governments and local municipality bodies. Second, we need to hand-hold grass-root level organisations so that they can implement infrastructure projects. Also, advocacy efforts should touch upon the scale of production that differentiates a HBW from a micro-enterprise and also involve communities in recognising commercial establishments.
2. **Jayantha Gunasekara:** One of the major issues regarding housing and family units is the lack of participation of men in the matters of the household. He felt it is important to get men more involved in appreciating and recognising both the paid and unpaid care work that women do.
3. **Renana Jhabvala:** In poor colonies, where the houses are below certain square feet, mixed zoning is allowed. However, in others it isn't. This should be an advocacy issue that we should take up and push for.
4. **Bijal Bhatt:** Every country has its national-level policies but when it comes to implementation at the city level, the local bodies do modify these rules a bit. MHT has been successful in securing water and electricity connections for home-based work. But yes, we need to lobby for better policies when it comes to zoning. Universal access to basic infrastructure needs to be delinked from the right to the land. We also need to explore other ways of securing land tenure. This could include defacto tenures where Governments ensure security of housing in exchange for a nominal fee or encourage slum dwellers to invest in basic infrastructure services like a water tap or a toilet.

MHT has advocated for renewable energy initiatives. In rural areas, we have encouraged HBWs to use solar-powered lamps, mobile chargers and fans. In the urban scenario, we push for legal grid connections and also encourage women to

conduct energy audits at home. Women save up to 25% when they undertake these audits and implement the findings.

5. **Janhavi Dave:** In many cities, like Ahmedabad, when women HBWs use one machine for their work, it poses no problems. However, when she uses more than one, the electricity metre becomes commercial and these become added expenses. So, we need to look into these implications as well.
6. **Quazi Baby:** Land ownership becomes a major issue when it comes to housing. When evictions happen, since the slum dwellers have no land rights, they end up losing their homes. We need to work towards changing this. Maybe they can be given land leases that last between 15 and 20 years. This will also help us reach the Sustainable Development Goals.

### **Planning Session**

This session was aimed at collectively discussing and coming out with ideas that could be used to formulate an Annual Plan for HNSA. Ms Renana Jhabvala invited the participants to the planning session. She then announced that in order to get the most out of the wealth of information and experience of all the participants, they would be divided into 4 theme groups that would discuss and bring forth suggestions on the following 4 themes, as these appeared to be the 4 main theme areas of work for HNSA in the coming year.

1. Advocacy and Organising
2. Livelihoods
3. Global Supply Chains
4. Emerging Themes

The groups were asked to dwell on the following questions

1. Things that we should all do, **individually** in our organisations.
2. Things that we should do **together** across the region and within the country
3. Where should we source funding from?
4. What should the HNSA Secretariat take up?

These are inputs provided under each theme:

#### **Advocacy and Organising**

##### **Q1. What can we all do, individually in our organisations?**

- i. Celebrate Home-based Worker's day, Womens Day, Labour Day, 16 Days of Activism, Habitat Day
- ii. Campaigns at local level for visibility for which we can develop our own promotional materials
- iii. Update our web sites, face book and twitter accounts and those organisations that don't have these can start them.
- iv. Campaign for ID cards for HBWs and ensure HBWs get them
- v. Link HBWs with existing social safety nets and skill development schemes
- vi. Organise HBWs into MBOs and increase membership
- vii. Strengthen leadership and governance
- viii. Advocacy for including own account home-based workers and sub-contracted home workers in national censuses, Labour Force Surveys and multi-cluster indicator surveys
- ix. Link HBW's organisations with trade unions

## **Q2. What can we do together as a network?**

- i. Develop a common agenda for advocacy at the regional level; strategise and develop an Action Plan for the same.
- ii. Organise a side event at the next CSW on home-based workers
- iii. Mainstream the HBW's agenda into different regional fora/bodies' agenda (eg. SAARC, SAARC TUC, SAARC Chamber of Commerce, SAARC Law
- iv. Link HBW's issues to regional campaigns like Living Wage, Social protection, and Occupational health and safety campaigns.

## **Q3. What are the various sources of funds that we can tap?**

- i. Private funds, trusts and foundations
- ii. Multi-lateral, bi-lateral and government sources
- iii. Use the consortium approach for raising funds as that is the preferred option of donors these days
- iv. For small amounts, the network members can use their own funds or raise funds
- v. Individual members can raise funds for regional events/campaigns which will benefit all members.

## **Q4. What can the HNSA secretariat do for the network?**

- i. Develop advocacy materials around Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and how they can be linked to HBWs.
- ii. Compile case studies of good practices and share with the network members
- iii. Advocacy with donors to include HBWs in their agenda – include them in their list of beneficiaries

## **Livelihoods**

### **Q1. What can we all do, individually in our organisations?**

- i. The expansion of membership should be there, across HBW organisations. But at the same time, we need to streamline our members so that work opportunities are available for all. This was specially meant for the SABAH organisations.
- ii. With SABAHS, skill and capacity building should be continuous.
- iii. Focus should also be on entrepreneurship building.
- iv. A platform exclusively for the SABAHs to learn and share. Through this, we should reach out to the SABAHs that are not registered with the network.
- v. Explore the avenue of collective marketing. Since it requires a lot of funds, we need to put this together step-by-step. We can look into collective designing and rope in designers to create one unique SABAH line.
- vi. In the future, an e-commerce platform could be maintained.
- vii. Home-based workers can be brought under larger organisations, like SABAH Nepal, and they are given training and undergo skill tests.

### **Q2. What can we do together as a network?**

- i. Joint advocacy messages should be chalked out within each country. The lead needs to be taken up by HNSA.
- ii. At the regional level, joint advocacy messages should be chalked out

**Q3. What are the various sources of funds that we can tap?**

- i. Funders – FDF, ICIMOD, South Asia Women Fund

**Q4. What can the HNSA secretariat do for the network?**

- i. HNSA should provide a theme , every year, for the celebration of home-based workers’ day
- ii. HNSA could take the lead in applying for funds that are directed to the SABAHs.
- iii. Revive SABAH Maldives. Right now 65% is owned by the Government, it needs to become an independent entity.
- iv. HNSA can lead the discussion on the livelihood debate in the region. Since HNSA does not have the focal point right now, SABAH Nepal can take the lead.
- v. We need to reach out to SABAH Bangladesh. Since they are not visible.

**Global Supply Chains**

**Q1. What can we do together as a network?**

- i. Need to build evidence that home-workers are present in the supply chain. It can be through a mapping or any other study. This needs to be done country-wise. Local researchers can be a part of the exercise.
- ii. We can then bring the data collected from each country and create a South Asia report.
- iii. Create a platform that includes MBOs, researchers, and companies too. These can build an agenda for home-workers.
- iv. Policy briefs that are aimed at the national governments and also the companies. The companies list will include global brands as well as domestic companies that are involved in exports.

**Q2. What are the various sources of funds that we can tap?**

- i. Funding can be sought from various, country-wise programmes, also national governments that source exports like Japan and America.
- ii. Funders – FEFNV, KFW, IFPS, and ILO
- iii. Donor mapping in country levels
- iv. Tweaking proposals to suit the donors

**Q3. What can the HNSA secretariat do for the network?**

- i. HNSA should be involved in technical hand-holding,
- ii. There are many research projects being undertaken, by HNSA and other organisations, we need to have a repository. This needs to be theme-based and present on the website.
- iii. Introduce microsites on our website so that we can showcase what HNSA’s partners are doing.

**Emerging Themes**

### **Q1. What can we all do, individually in our organisations?**

- i. Organisations working within the country should come together for joint programmes like the recently concluded JDC project in Nepal. We should come together for celebrations as well.
- ii. Financial literacy is a must for HBWs and so are healthcare facilities

### **Q2. What can we do together as a network?**

- i. Each country should work towards achieving recognition of HBWs as a vulnerable group. This should be done in collaboration with the Government.
- ii. We should work with the Government to ensure social security
- iii. Involving CSR teams, in companies, to address HBW issues
- iv. Celebration of HBW Days and other important occasions across the region
- v. Establish a product house that specialises in goods produced by the HBWs. This is a regional platform.
- vi. Social media should be used to share knowledge and showcase our work
- vii. Good documentation of case studies and this information should be disseminated.
- viii. Provide training plus implementing basic infrastructure facilities since they yield positive results
- ix. Mapping studies should be conducted to shine a light on violence against women among home-based workers
- x. Small focus group discussions can be conducted, internally in organisations, to study how a project/activity has affected the occurrence of violence. You can do this in multiple areas and then put together a report.
- xi. Every year, we must focus on an issue or an emerging trend so that there is action
- xii. If we can say that areas, where HNSA or its partner organisations work, are violence free then it gives us a big push, especially when it comes to donors.
- xiii. Educating women on violence. It need not be just physical violence and women need to recognise that.
- xiv. Housing should have risk transfer mechanism. Housing insurance and life insurance should be our focus.

### **Q3. What are the various sources of funds that we can tap?**

- i. Link HBWs with SDGs to procure funding
- ii. Approaching non-traditional funders and also crowd sourcing

### **Q4. What can the HNSA secretariat do for the network?**

- i. Technical support should be provided by HNSA
- ii. Information sharing too should be the focus of HNSA
- iii. HNSA should bring technical support in areas of housing

## **Discussion On The VISION For HNSA - 2030**

It was in 2010 that the HNSA developed a Vision 2015 for the organisations. It was felt that since much has changed since then, it was time to draft a new Vision for the network. Ms Renana Jhabvala chaired the final session of the meeting. She requested the members to help contribute to HNSA's vision for 2030 (since the SDGs are also slotted for the same time period).

The HNSA Trustee Board had come up with an initial **draft vision statement**, which was:

**HomeNet South Asia and its partners take the lead in empowering home-based workers, especially women workers, to lead a life of dignity, free of poverty, through decent work and social protection, and share experiences by creating and strengthening international and regional platforms.**

Some suggestions provided by the members, on the Vision Statement are:

1. 'Partners' should read as 'members'.
2. The vision should stop at "to lead a life of dignity, free of poverty." The rest is strategy and should not be part of the vision.
3. The term 'social justice' should be included. It can replace social protection.
4. 'Take the lead' should be replaced by 'strives' – HomeNet South Asia and its partners strive to empower...
5. It should include 'South Asia regional platform' or regional solidarity should be included.

Ms Jhabvala then presented the **Broad Strokes of the VISION 2030**, as they emerged from the Trustee meeting. They are:

1. Global HomeNet with regional chapters
2. SABAH as a famous South Asia brand
3. More visibility for HNSA – HNSA well known and famous
4. Good fund flow – HNSA worth billions
5. Strong group of HBW leaders working together across the world
6. Acknowledgement of the identity and diversity of HBWs
7. Recognition of HBWs for achieving SDGs
8. HNSA as a model grants management organization
9. Connecting and creating linkages
10. Mission and commitment towards poor HBWs
11. Knowledge hub for Women's Work
12. Trust worthy non threatening, inclusive learning platform
13. Upholder of HBWs dignity.
14. Being the bridge between HBWs and trade union federations
15. HNSA seen as a key player in policy making.
16. HNSA becomes a technical support organization for country level contractors for women's economic empowerment.

On the Broad Strokes, the inputs given were:

1. The broad strokes should elaborate on regional solidarity. HNSA should take lead in building this solidarity.
2. It should highlight the fact the HBWs contribute to economy by paying indirect taxes. What is their contribution to the national incomes, taxes, GDP, and the financial system? We should have good figures on these.
3. Negotiate better positions for women, HBWs by highlighting that they make their own contributions towards social protection schemes
4. Achieve status as a SAARC recognised body
5. Figures and data collected through Census. Build linkages with the Census Departments so that they map HBWs.
6. Instead of acceptance in trade unions we should strive for being the bridge between trade federations and HBWs. Since many HBWs already consider themselves as part of trade union movements.
7. When HBW policies are made we should be the key driving forces behind them
8. Advocate for 'Place of Work' to be included in Labour Force Surveys
9. HomeNet South Asia should decide what areas it wants to focus on – does it want to be an implementer, an advocacy organisation, a research organisation, a facilitator, and a resource mobiliser? The organisation should decide whether it wants to focus on all or choose only a few key areas.
10. Normal functions of a network are – information sharing, a platform for voices to be heard, and advocacy. Should we go beyond this?
11. Come up with social indicators that reflect the impact and the strength of the HBWs not just in terms of numbers. How can we showcase this to our donors as well?

**Conclusion:** After this robust discussion, Ms Jhabvala brought the meeting to an end with a vote of thanks. Ms Janhavi Dave also thanked SABAH Nepal and Ms Chandni Joshi for their help in making the event a success. She also thanked all the participants for taking the time and participating in the meeting with so much enthusiasm.

