

REGIONAL POLICY SEMINAR

**"WOMEN WORKERS IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR IN SOUTH ASIA:
CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT"**

KATHMANDU, 18-20 OCTOBER, 2000

**ORGANIZED BY UNIFEM AND THE GOVERNMENT OF NEPAL
IN CONJUNCTION WITH IDRC AND WIEGO**

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Preface

(by Chandni Joshi)

Background

Since 1995, the Aga Khan Foundation Canada and UNIFEM have supported a series of research, documentation and training initiatives to promote women's economic empowerment in the South Asia Region. This approach addresses women's needs for material gains, bargaining power and structural or policy changes. It is based on the premise that economic empowerment is a process and an outcome that results from women organizing and then working to address the economic, socio-cultural and policy constraints they encounter in trying to achieve sustainable livelihoods for themselves and their families. The programme has been led by a team of economic empowerment experts from SEWA (Renana Jhabvala), Harvard University (Marty Chen), and UNIFEM (Marilyn Carr). A series of workshops in Canada, Pakistan and India introduced the economic empowerment approach to NGOs, government decision makers and donors and involved workshop participants in a dialogue about the most effective means for achieving women's economic empowerment.

Research and dialogue to date have concentrated mainly on the material gains and increased bargaining power aspects of economic empowerment, but there is increased realization that, if sustainable improvements are to be realized, much more attention needs to be paid to the third aspect – structural changes and the policy environment for women's economic empowerment. Accordingly, it was decided to organize a Regional Policy Seminar at which such issues could be discussed jointly by policy makers, NGOs and organizations of women workers which are heavily involved in advocating for policy changes which most deeply affect women in the informal sector.

In order to give focus to the meeting, it was decided to concentrate on one (the largest category) on non-agricultural informal sector workers – women homebased workers; and also - in addition to looking generally at the way in which global, regional and national economic policies are affecting the livelihoods of such workers – to highlight the existing and potential impact of one specific set of policies –viz labour policies and legislation. The reason for choosing this focus was to be able to explore the potential advantageous impact on homebased workers of changing labour policies as a follow-up to the ILO Convention on Homeworkers approved in 1996.

The seminar was attended by 50 participants from five South Asian countries – Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka¹. Each country was represented by an official from the Ministry of Labour and/or from the Ministry responsible for Women's Affairs, and NGO, and a representative of a homebased workers association. Also participating were representatives of SAARC, ILO, IDRC, Commonwealth Secretariat and UNIFEM, as well as the three person resource team.

The aim of the seminar was to look at the policy environment affecting homebased workers in the region (with special emphasis on labour policies and legislation) with a view to making

¹ A participant list is attached as Annex I

recommendations for policy, research and action to improve their position. To achieve this objective, the meeting had two major parts:

*consideration of the macro-policy framework (national, regional and international) which affects all homebased workers; and

*consideration of the way in which policies and legislation (particularly national labour policies) work themselves out from the perspective of specific types of homebased workers (e.g. emroidereres, coir workers, agarbatti workers) given that the conditions of workers in each sub-sector – and hence the way in which policies impact on them – differ so greatly.

In preparation for the meeting, several background papers were prepared with financial assistance from AKFC, IDRC, UNIFEM and WIEGO². These were distributed to participants in advance of the meeting and were also presented briefly by their authors at the meeting itself. In addition to these presentations, there were also country presentations by government officials from all countries except Bangladesh, and presentations by six NGOs and homebased workers associations from the five countries. The meeting ended with country working groups to discuss next steps for action and research at the national and regional levels which were framed within a 'Kathmandu Declaration on Women Workers in the Informal Sector' which has recommendations both for national governments and for SAARC.³

Summary of Presentations

The Regional Policy Seminar started with an Inauguration Session at which Chandni Joshi, Regional Programme Director, UNIFEM gave the welcome address. This was followed by opening remarks by Ela Bhatt, Founder of SEWA and Chair of WIEGO, HomeNet and StreetNet; His Excellency Minister of Labour and Transport Management, Mr. Surendra Hamal; and His Excellency Secretary General, Mr. Nihal Rodrigo. The Inauguration Address by His Excellency Minister of Industry, Commerce and Supplies, His Majesty's Government of Nepal, Mr. Ram Krishna Tamrakar was followed by a Vote of Thanks by Martha Chen, Coordinator, WIEGO. She thanked the Government of Nepal for hosting the meeting, and the Aga Khan Foundation and the International Development Research Centre for their financial support.

Following the Inauguration Session, there were a number of introductory sessions. Ela Bhatt gave a presentation on 'Why the Informal Sector; Why Homebased Workers?'. She began by explaining that when she started SEWA in 1972 with the twin objectives of promoting informal sector workers in the international labour movement and of promoting women workers as leaders in the international women's movement. "After all," she noted, "who is the workforce and who are the women?" Ela Bhatt went on to explain that the biggest hurdle SEWA faced in promoting informal sector workers in the international labour movement was a conceptual bias

² These are: Chen, M. and M. Carr, *Homebased Workers in South Asia: Creating an Enabling Environment*; Bajaj, M. *Invisible Workers, Visible Contributions: A Study of Homebased Workers in Five Sectors across South Asia*; Unni. J. *Women in the Informal Sector in South Asia: A Review of the Evidence*; Singh, N. *Situating Homebased Work in the Webs of the Macroscopic*; and BISCONS, *Surfacing the Ignored Ones: A Study of Homebased Women Workers in the Informal Sector in Nepal*. All papers are available from WIEGO or UNIFEM in New Delhi and are also available on the WIEGO web site: www.wiego.org

³ A copy of the agenda for the meeting is attached as Annex II.

voice of the against those who work outside an employer-employee relationship. This bias is reflected in the “unreal divide” between the formal and informal sectors and a neglect of the informal workforce. In developing countries, however, a substantial and growing share of workers work outside the so-called formal sector. In India, for example, the share of the informal sector in the total workforce has grown from 89 % in the early 1970s to 92% in the late 1990s. SEWA seeks to promote the visibility (in statistics and policies) and voice (through organization and representation) of women who work in the informal sector. Ela Bhatt concluded by emphasizing that what is required – “firstly, lastly, and all through” - is collective organizing and the collective women workers.

This was followed by presentations by two women homebased workers from Nepal: Bimala Subha who is a weaver, and Pashupati who makes hand-made paper. Bimala explained that she learned to weave as a child from her parents, that she migrated to Kathmandu from an eastern region of Nepal some ten years ago, and that to establish and run her weaving unit (with 10 employees) she received credit and marketing services from an NGO called Mahaguti. Pashupati explained that she learned to make paper as a child from her parents, that she used to sell the hand-made paper at low prices to agents from Kathmandu, that she too migrated to Kathmandu from the eastern part of Nepal, and that she barely makes enough from her small paper-making unit to pay for the rising costs of rent and electricity.

Finally, Marty Chen and Marilyn Carr gave an overview on women in the informal sector as well as some highlights from their background paper prepared for the meeting so as to give the context for the deliberations during the following two days. They covered three major points: (a) the background to and purpose of the workshop; (b) the reasons for focusing on women in the informal sector in general and home-based workers in particular; and (c) the main points brought out in the background papers commissioned for the meeting. The purpose of the regional policy seminar is to increase the visibility and voice of women who work in the informal sector, particularly home-based workers, and to promote supportive policies and programs in the various countries of South Asia. The share of the informal sector in total non-agricultural employment in South Asian countries – over 80% on average in the region – is the highest in the world and is likely to increase. Also, in most South Asian countries, home-based workers account for a majority share – 60 to 90% - of selected key export industries, including: the agarbatti and bidi industries in India, the football industry in Pakistan, and the coir industry in Sri Lanka. Yet their contribution to these industries remains invisible. There is, therefore, a need to raise the visibility of women who work in the informal sector, particularly home-based workers, and to develop national policy frameworks to promote their contributions to GDP, to support their livelihoods, and to protect their welfare.

Following the introductory session, there were a series of country presentations by officials of the Ministry of Labour or Ministry of Women's Affairs, and by NGOs and associations of homebased workers. The government presentations gave accounts of the situation of labour participation of women in their countries, including any available information on homebased workers. They also outlined current labour policy in respect of homebased workers (pointing out that they mainly are excluded), and what, if any changes they expect to make following the

adoption of the ILO Convention on Homework. Although the emphasis was on labour policy and legislation at the national level, several of these government presentations pointed out the limited effect of introducing more positive labour policies in an environment of increased privatization and globalization which is wiping out millions of informal sector jobs in the region. They also agreed with NGO participants that the millions of women who work in agro-processing/food processing tend to fall between two stools – they are not counted as agricultural workers, nor are they included in artisanal informal classifications.⁴

The NGO/Homebased Workers' Associations' presentations concentrated on the numbers and situation of homebased workers. The picture was the same from all countries and all sectors and included: large numbers; low pay/piece rates; uncertain/fluctuation work orders and delayed payments; no voice or bargaining power; exploitation by middlemen; bad working conditions; major health problems; and no benefits such as health insurance. In all, there were six presentations from: Aurat in Pakistan; Bangladesh Homeworkers Women Association (BHWA); SEWA in MP; the Nepal Trade Union Congress; Adithi in India; and CENWOR/Siyath Foundation in Sri Lanka. A summary of each presentation is given below.

Misbah Tahir described the findings of AURAT's study of over 800 low-income women homebased workers involved in garments and leatherwork in four cities in Punjab. Problems were recorded as being limited availability and irregularity of work; low wages; and delayed payments and irregularity of payments. Despite these problems, women continue to do homebased work because the constraints placed by male members of their households on their mobility prevents them taking on other types of work, and also they are able to combine housework with paid work done at home. It is difficult to work enough hours to earn a decent wage and time is at premium to such an extent that many women use private health care facilities because they cannot afford the time to sit around waiting in public health clinics.

Veena Ahmed of the Bangladesh Homeworkers Associations explained that this had been formed as a trade union in 1986. It has 20 organizations with a total of 25,000 homebased workers in a range of subsectors. Major problems faced by members include: restriction of mobility; and lack of education and knowledge.

Sikha Joshi explained that SEWA MP, which was started in 1985 now has 60,000 members of whom 50% are homebased workers. SEWA has been able to bring about significant increases in piece rates paid to its members. For example, bidi workers are now paid Rs.34 per 1000 bidis as opposed to only Rs5 in 1985; and agarbatti workers are paid Rs.12 per kilo as opposed to only Rs.2 in 1997. Also, garment workers who used to have to rent their machines at exorbitant rates now own these. SEWA runs campaigns and offers support services including a savings and credit cooperative.

The Nepal Trade Union Congress, which encompasses 20 national trades unions federations with 200,000 workers, was introduced by its President, Laxman Basnet. Although 90% of the workforce in Nepal is agricultural, it only became legal to unionize such workers in 1992. Outside of agriculture, the largest informal sector activity is carpet making which employs

⁴ The country statements from India, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Pakistan are included in Annex VI. Unfortunately there were no official government representatives from Bangladesh at the meeting.

700,000 people in Kathmandu alone. Workers tend to be exploited – especially given globalization and the increased demand for cheaper products. Problems other than low pay include violence against women workers in factories, and lack of social security benefits.

Adithi in Bihar was started by Viji Srinivasan in 1988 and now has 80,000 women members. After explaining the gender bias in piece rates within the informal sector (e.g. women bidi workers get Rs.15 per 1000 versus Rs.20 earned by men), she went on to describe two major sub-sectors in which women homebased workers are involved. These are leaf plate making and traditional embroidery. There are 200,000-300,000 women involved in leaf plate making in Bihar of whom 2000 have so far been organized by Adithi. Despite the fact that there is a growing demand for leaf plates, women can earn only Rs.3 per day in this occupation at the moment. The rates are so low because of the ease of entry and because of the lack of anything else to do. However, there are possibilities of improving the lot of these women through organizing and introduction of improved technologies and marketing techniques. In the case of traditional embroidery, Adithi has assisted in this becoming a commercial activity and in the value placed on women 's traditional skills and products being increased. It is now possible to earn Rs. 1000 per month in this activity.

Finally, there were two presentations from Sri Lanka. Janakie Abeywardene from CENWOR introduced a report which was prepared specially for the seminar⁵ which looked at homebased workers in a large range of products and found that foreign investors prefer sub-contracting to homeworkers because this avoids investment in infrastructure and gets around national labour legislation. Prema Gamage of the Siyath ('100 hands') Foundation added to this by pointing out that existing national economic policies prevent women from breaking free of exploitation rather than assisting them to gain better working conditions. She commented on how conditions faced by homebased workers in Sri Lanka were very similar to those outlined in the presentations from all other countries.

Summary of Presentations by Governments and NGOs: There were some definite common themes and underlying differences coming out of these presentations as follows:

Common Themes: The first factor which seems to be common in all countries is that the informal sector is a large and growing sector of the economy and that homebased workers represent a large and growing proportion of this sector. They are engaged in many trades and sectors of the economy and produce a large number of products. They can be employees, own account workers or sub-contracted workers. Second, in all countries homebased workers are invisible, unrecognized, voiceless and unorganized. As such, they are deprived of their basic rights, and they work under poor conditions which include low wages, long hours, irregular work and delayed payments. Third, the consequences of being a homebased worker are those of living in poverty and in poor health, and lacking in security. Fourth, homebased workers have a multiple set of needs: as people living in poverty, they require social services and the range of basic needs; as part of the informal sector, they require visibility and voice; as homebased workers, they require rights as workers and producers; and as women, they need a reduction in the gender gap in wages, maternity leave and child care. Finally, in all countries, there is a lack of policies and legislation to protect women homebased workers; and also a problem in

⁵ Jayaweera, S. and J. Abeywardene, *Organizing Working with Homebased Women Workers in Sri Lanka*.

implementing any policies which might be in favour of them. Homebased workers tend not to be organized and therefore cannot effectively advocate for the introduction and /or enforcement of positive policies and legislation.

Underlying Differences: Differences between and within countries were also noticed in several respects. The reasons for women being homebased workers differed according to: personal preferences and capacities; socio-cultural practices affecting women's mobility and attitudes to what is women's work; differing legal frameworks; and differing impact of the market place – behaviour of employers and foreign investors, effect of globalization and privatization, etc. Responses to the plight of homebased workers also differ in different contexts. In some cases, development interventions ---credit, training, technology, marketing – are preferred; and in others struggle-oriented interventions – organizing and collective bargaining - are adopted. Part of the reason for these differences is the orientation/experience of the actors involved. For example, NGOs favour support services, while unions are more comfortable with collective bargaining. However, the key difference is that of whether the homebased worker is own account (self-employed) or is a sub-contracted worker; and also which trade or sub-sector she/he is involved in.

The second day of the meeting was devoted to looking at some of these commonalities and differences in greater detail and was based around the presentation of the specialist background papers which were prepared for the meeting, and which provide a good overview of the issues involved across sectors and countries.

Most of the morning was devoted to the ILO Convention on Homeworkers and to examples of the work that has been done in India since the Convention was passed in terms of changing National Labour Policies and undertaking detailed statistical work on homebased workers to inform policies.

There were accounts of the ILO Convention and the process leading up to it from two different perspectives. The first by Layla Tegmo-Reddy of the ILO gave the history of the Convention from the ILO perspective, as well as highlighting its major components and giving some suggestions for follow-up. Work at the ILO went back to the 1970's when the term 'informal sector' was first coined there. Involvement continued through the 1980's and early 1990's, with numerous studies, including several on homebased workers. A synthesis of these studies pinpointed gaps in legislation which were used to inform the process leading to the Convention being placed on the agenda. The role of workers organizations, and particularly SEWA, in helping to make this happen was acknowledged. As for the Convention itself, there was much debate at ILO over definitions but, finally, it was agreed that a homebased worker must possess the following three characteristics: (a) they must work in a place other than that of their employer; (b) they must work for remuneration; and (c) their work must result in a product specified by the employer. A major objective of the Convention is to improve equality between homebased workers and other wage earners. As for follow-up, the Convention has been ratified by Finland and Ireland, with ratification being considered by five other countries. The role of workers in ensuring that changes now occur was stressed, as well as the need for national and regional meetings to raise awareness.

The second presentation by Renana Jhabvala of SEWA outlined the Association's twenty year struggle to bring the ILO Convention into being. Hostility on the part of Trade Unions (who felt homebased workers were undercutting their members) and disinterest on the part of governments (who assumed that homebased workers were an unimportant group) was overcome through a long and laborious process which finally resulted in both unions and governments supporting the cause. It was explained how SEWA's contacts with organizations of homebased workers in other countries had led to the creation of HomeNet, and how this had helped to raise the visibility and voice of homebased workers at the international level. An important aspect of the Convention is that it covers not merely labour protection but also development, and therefore includes many things not present in other Conventions. SEWA is anxious to ensure that homebased workers themselves are fully involved in follow-up to the convention, and also in promoting the need for new types of Trade Unions which incorporate development in their mandate.

Following the ILO Convention, there has been much work done in India in respect of changing national labour policies in favour of homebased workers. This process was outlined by Mr. S.K.Das, the Director General, Labour and Welfare of the Ministry of Labour. Current legislation largely excludes homebased workers, but the Ministry of Labour has been working closely with SEWA and others to see how benefits can be extended to them. The process of consultations led to a formal meeting in January 2000 at which time a draft policy was formulated and submitted for approval. If passed, this will be an important first step in assisting homebased workers, but attention also has to be given to the fact that increasing privatization and globalization are badly impacting the informal sector and that changes in labour legislation alone will not be enough to protect their position.

The National Task Force which has been working on National Labour Policies requested the Gujarat Institute for Development Research (GIDR) and SEWA to undertake an in-depth statistical study of homebased workers to provide information on which to base its recommendations. Jeemol Unni of GIDR and a representative of the research team explained the complicated and lengthy process involved in coming up with better statistics on homebased workers. Difficulties involve that of dealing with workers who participate in several types of homebased work, as well as agricultural work, during the year. However, for the first time ever, a national estimate has been derived revealing that there are just over 30 million homebased workers in India.

Participants felt that all of the above was highly commendable and should be well documented and disseminated as an example to others on what can be achieved. However, some concern was expressed that not all countries have the resources available in India and lack prominent advocacy organizations such as SEWA. It was pointed out that while not all countries could, at this time, achieve what has been possible in India, there are a range of strategies which can be helpful, many of which demand far fewer resources. One of these could be to carry out a mapping of homebased workers at the country level to act as a basis for discussions with government. An example was presented from Nepal where BISCONS was commissioned by UNIFEM to undertake such a study which has been positively received by government. UNIFEM has commissioned similar studies in Sri Lanka and Nepal.

One factor which does seem important in moving forward on positive changes in labour legislation is that of having sympathetic officials in key Ministries. The country presentation by the Pakistan delegation highlighted that such a situation exists there; government is very anxious to bring about change in favour of homebased workers, and indeed, is considering ratification of the ILO Convention. However, there is a lack of understanding of how to bring about positive change and a lack of information on how to proceed. Meetings on such issues which provide an opportunity to exchange experiences are very important.

This macro-perspective on labour policies and legislation relating to homebased workers was followed by a series of presentations which looked at homebased workers in specific subsectors. Rabeya Yasmin of BRAC gave a detailed account of the poultry programme which now employs over one million women in a production chain that involves chick rearing, poultry production, feed mills, vaccinations, and marketing of eggs, and which has formed innovative linkages with government extensions services to the benefit of all. Shaheda Azami of ITDG gave an overview of the size and contribution of the food processing sector in Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, and looked at some of the ways in which improved technologies (and related training and credit) can improve the working conditions and productivity of homebased workers in this sector. The numbers of women involved are very high, but food processing gets left out of many classifications of types of homebased workers which focus on non-agricultural activities. Discussions earlier in the day also pointed to this omission and to the need for clarification.

Finally, Manjul Bajaj, the consultant commissioned by IDRC to undertake a major review of homebased workers in five subsectors in five countries presented the highlights of her study. The paper looked at the size and contribution of homebased workers – as well as the constraints faced by them – in the coir industry in Sri Lanka, the agarbatti industry in India, medicinal plants in Nepal, embroidery in Bangladesh, and leather footballs in Pakistan. It also looked at the labour policies and legislation affecting homebased workers in each of these sectors/countries. While the paper includes a wealth of information on homebased workers in these sub-sectors, there is clearly a need for much more research to be done which can be used as a basis for informing both labour and economic policies.

In summary, the main conclusions arising from the presentation and discussion of the specialist papers were: (a) the need to document the processes relating to the ILO Convention and changes in National Policies; (b) the need for information on ways and means of making the Convention known and of assisting governments which are interested in making changes in labour legislation to do so; (c) the need to support more mapping studies, statistical work and sub-sector research to form the basis for dialogue and to inform policy; and (d) the need to give further thought to how globalization is impacting on the informal sector and what this means in terms of national labour policies, including in terms of moving out of threatened industries and into growth areas such as the service sector.

The Kathmandu Declaration

Arising out of the deliberations of the meeting, a Kathmandu Declaration on Women Workers in the Informal Sector was drafted by a drafting committee on behalf of all participants. This was

the subject of a plenary debate during the final morning of the seminar. Following this discussion, the Declaration was finalized and reads as follows:

KATHMANDU DECLARATION ON WOMEN WORKERS IN THE INFORMAL
SECTOR, PARTICULARLY HOMEBASED WORKERS

The South Asian Regional Meeting on Women Workers in the Informal Sector: Creating an Enabling Environment, participated by the the Governments of India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and by trade unions, Non-governmental organizations, relevant UN and international organizations 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, unorganized 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 globalization and liberalization, particularly in South Asia,

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

And noting that there are at least 50 million homebased workers in South Asia of whom around 80% 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 homebased worker 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 organize, minimum remuneration, occupational health and safety, statutory social protection, maternity, child-care, skill development and literacy programme.
2. Access to markets and economic resources including raw materials, marketing infrastructure, technology , credit and information.
3. Set up Social Funds for homebased 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 homebased workers and their contribution to national economies.

B. Urges SAARC to address the issues of homebased workers in the region and take measures to enable them to deal with the risks and opportunities of globalization 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 homebased products in the SAFTA priority list.

The Declaration has two audiences:

*national governments: country teams will take the declaration back to their countries to discuss in further detail with key government officials;

*SAARC : the meeting will formerly present the Declaration to the SAARC Secretary-General through UNIFEM.

Proposed Follow-up

Finally, participants broke into country groups to discuss follow-up at the country level. They were asked to discuss:

- (a) steps needed to promote national plans and programmes based on the Declaration; and
- (b) sub-sectors which are priority in terms of numbers of homebased workers involved and changes occurring as a result of globalization.

The steps recommended by the country teams are as follows:

Nepal

1. Formation of advocacy groups comprising all stakeholders
2. Formation of Network
3. Research for data base creation
4. Inclusion of homebased workers in national policies and programmes
5. Implementation and follow-up of review of homebased workers
6. Experience sharing across the region
7. Key sectors: food processing, bamboo crafts and wood carving; spinning and weaving; jewellery; forest products – herbs, honey, incense, matches; bidi making

Bangladesh

1. National data base on informal agro-based activities
2. Strengthen human resource development policy with particular focus on food processing technology
3. Include food processing technology in non-formal education
4. Emphasis on food processing sector – confectionary, snacks, dried product

India

1. Appraise concerned government departments of the Kathmandy Declaration
2. Strengthen machinery to collect statistics on informal sector and on homebased workers.
3. Collect baseline data and organize research studies on:
 - subsectors where homebased workers are concentrated

- effects of globalization on homebased workers
- possible effects of WTO agreements on homebased workers

Specific activities/steps include:

1. Finalize National Policy on Homebased Workers
2. Formulate a Bill on protection and social security of Homebased Workers and develop suitable implementation mechanisms
3. Formulate the National Policy and Homebased Workers Bill in a participatory way with trade unions and NGOs interacting with Government
4. Have state-level workshops, focussing on important sub-sectors
5. Take forward the process of Threadlines India in order link Homebased Workers directly into markets
6. Strengthen organizing at the grassroots level through civil society organizations.

Pakistan

1. National Policy on Homebased Workers to be formulated by Ministries of Labour and Manpower, Women's Development and the National Commission on the Status of Women, Food and Agriculture, Industry, Commerce;
2. Policy to be implemented by Ministry for Labour and Manpower;
3. Data to be collected by National Bureau of Statistics in collaboration with Provincial Government, local bodies and civil society organizations;
4. Ministry of Information to create awareness and sensitize media;
5. Networking between Government and civil society organizations
6. Emphasis on important sectors: garments, embroidery, leather, paper work , food and fruit preservation and packaging, agriculture, livestock, fisheries, forestry.

Sri Lanka

1. Kathmandu Declaration to be considered by MPPS, 'Samrudhi' and Rural Development. Ministries of Women's Affairs, Labour, and Social Services; "Samrudhi" is key national programme to be influenced;
2. Sector-based information to be used (or generated) to develop sector/product specific action plans including: (a) credit products.packages; (b) resource centres that provide technical information, skill development, access to machinery, market information, business skills development, legal aid, etc;
3. Plans to be discussed regionally.