

VOICES

from



Efforts in collaboration: A roundup of the past months

Oct - Dec, 2024

We wrapped up 2024 with lots of meaningful discussions and activities at the grassroots level - from climate change to violence against women. We are thrilled to share them all with you. Read on.



HOMENET SOUTH ASIA

HOMENET SOUTH ASIA'S ADVISORY BOARD MEETING UNITED TRUSTEES, ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS, AND STAFF TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES FACED BY HOME-BASED WORKERS (HBWS).

18-19 November, 2024

Our Advisory Board Meeting of 2024 offered an apt platform for solidarity, recognition and future planning. Held in Kathmandu, it brought together the members of the Advisory Board, our affiliate representatives and home-based worker sisters to brainstorm, understand, and forge collaborative ways to navigate the numerous challenges faced by HBWs.

After a warm welcome and engaging ice-breaking sessions, the event offered a chance to celebrate the key achievements of the last 5 years. This included access to better wages for piece rate workers and diverse milestones around social security, healthcare and childcare. We celebrated the advocacy efforts that have paved the way for systemic changes – from policy submissions to steps taken for labour law changes and more.



An action plan was charted out by each member organisation, listing out the goals for next year – and highlighting HomeNet South Asia’s role in their strategy. The organisations also underlined the tangible steps that will be taken to get closer to these goals. These plans were worked on, to be presented by each organisation when the session resumed the following day.

This was followed by a panel discussion around violence against women and the workable interventions that can be undertaken to curb this violence. The day’s proceedings were wrapped up with an engaging dinner at the Village Cafe – an HBW-run enterprise.

The second day started with action plan presentations by each organisation across countries. This was followed by a session that presented global perspectives from the different regions of HomeNet International. Another key panel discussion was hosted, outlining the issue of climate change and how it impacts home-based workers from different regions. Country-specific insights were shared as a part of this session.

In the closing session, under the able leadership of Chairperson Ms. Renana Jhabvala and Enforcer Ms. Chandni Joshi, HNSA hosted a roundtable discussion: ‘Listening to the Stories from the Ground & Creating Spaces for Home Based Workers’. It was a rare occasion where the dignitaries listened to the powerful voices of home-based workers from South Asia - who bravely shared their stories of resilience, strength, and determination in the face of invisibility.



Hon. Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Security, Government of Nepal Mr. Sharat Singh Bhandari; Hon. Chair of National Commission for Women; Hon. Member of Human Rights Commission; Hon. Member of the National Planning Commission, the Ambassador of Bangladesh, the Ambassador of Pakistan, the Director of SAARC, UN Women, key policy-makers, advocates and many other thought leaders were present at the event.

Their presence and commitment to amplifying the voices of these workers brought us closer to ensuring that their unrecognised, invisible, and uncounted contributions are finally seen, valued, and celebrated. The Honorable Minister also gave the Nepal Government's commitment to ratify ILO C177 in 2026 and ILO C190 in 2025 while addressing the audience.

A book showcasing case studies of home-based workers of Bangladesh, India and Nepal was also launched at the event by the Hon. Minister in the presence of the four home-based workers who were featured in the book. Together with multi-stakeholders, HNSA is building a stronger and a more inclusive future for home-based workers – one where their voices are heard, their rights are upheld, and their contributions are recognised.



Following up on our Advisory Board Meeting, HomeNet South Asia, HomeNet International, and Nepali affiliates met with the Honorable Minister of Labour, Employment, and Social Security, Mr. Sharat Singh Bhandari, on 28 November, 2024.

We presented the Kathmandu Declaration and Eight-Point Call to Action, emphasising the interventions needed to recognise home-based workers in Nepal. While welcoming the government's commitment to ratify ILO C177 by 2026, they stressed the importance of strategic prerequisites. The delegation, composed of representatives from Home Based Worker Concerned Society Nepal, Sabah Nepal, WHR Nepal, ClassNepal, Khokana Women Awareness Society, Saathi, and Women Skill Development Organization, expressed gratitude for the Minister's time and suggestions.



BANGLADESH

A NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON ELIMINATING GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN BANGLADESH BY RATIFYING ILO C 190 WAS ORGANISED BY BANGLADESH ALLIANCE FOR RATIFYING C190 (BARC-190).

5 December, 2024

Objectives of the event:

- Discuss the current state of gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) in the workplace in Bangladesh, and outline the shared responsibilities of alliance members and stakeholders in addressing these issues effectively.
- Gather recommendations to build a comprehensive strategy to accelerate the campaign for the ratification of ILO Convention 190 in Bangladesh, with a focus on gender-based violence.
- Strengthen collective advocacy and campaigns on GBV issues at the national level.



The event was organised by BRAC 190. The Bangladesh Alliance for Ratifying C-190 (BARC-190) is a dedicated alliance of National Trades unions, national affiliates of Global Union Federations (GUFs), informal sector workers' organisations, gender experts, women rights organisations and labour rights CSOs Dhaka, who are focused on promoting and advocating for the ratification and implementation of the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Convention No. 190 in Bangladesh.



The alliance focused on raising awareness about the importance of this convention, mobilising support across various sectors, and urging the government of Bangladesh to take the necessary steps to formally adopt the convention. BARC-190 was formally launched. Through its efforts, the alliance strives to protect workers' rights and create a more equitable and secure workplace for all people in Bangladesh.



It was an engaging session with multiple stakeholders like home-based workers, trade unions, NGOs, women's groups, legal organisations, journalists and INGOs sharing their experiences, inputs and suggestions on ratification of ILO C190.

On **8 December, 2024** a National Level Networking and Strategy Building Workshop was organised by LIE and HNSA.

Objectives of the event:

- To address the current policy needs addressing the rights of the Home-Based Workers in Bangladesh.
- To strengthen the capacities and voices of HBWs and their representative organisations in advocating for legal reforms aligned with C190, addressing the issue of violence and harassment against women in the world of home-based work.
- To develop networking and solidarity to uphold labour rights for informal workers.



The draft of the National Policy Proposal for Home Based Workers in Bangladesh was presented to the audience. This draft has been developed by a core committee comprising members of the HBW Right Network Bangladesh, LIE, CUP, PDAP and trade unions. The session was chaired by Mr. Md Nuruzzaman, Director, National Academy for Planning and Development, Ministry of Planning, Government of Bangladesh. Ms. Farida Khanam presented the draft policy. Ms. Sristi Joshi Malla presented regional perspectives on the

issues. Ms. Rebeka Sunyat made the closing remarks. The session was facilitated by Mr. Repon MR Chowdhury. The Policy Input Paper on Violence Against Women Home-Based Workers in Bangladesh was presented to the audience by Mr. SM Morshed. The session was very interactive with a healthy discussion on the issues.



MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT, GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH, MR. AHM SHAFIQUZZAMAN

On **9 December, 2024** we met the Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of Bangladesh, Mr. AHM Shafiquzzaman to present the draft of the National Policy Proposal for Home Based Workers in Bangladesh. We briefed him on the issues and concerns of HBWs, which needed to be included in the Labour Laws for informal workers.



INDIA

SURAKSHIT STHAAN, HUMARA HAQ: A SEWA BHARAT INITIATIVE

25 November, 2024 - 10 December, 2024

As a part of the #16DaysOfActivism campaign, our affiliate partners SEWA Bharat, initiated a much-needed discussion on women's safety in public spaces. The community event organised by them engaged the women in 10 areas – Mustafabad, Sunder Nagari, Nandnagari, New Ashok Nagar, Jahangirpuri, Bhalswa, Rajeev Nagar, Harkesh Nagar, Raghubir Nagar and Sangam Vihar, prompted them to share their experiences around safety, and walk together to identify the public spaces deemed unsafe.

On the concluding day of the campaign, a public event was held which also involved various stakeholders such as the District Magistrate (DM), Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM), and members of Local Committees to discuss tangible, collective action and formal mechanisms that can be implemented to create safe public spaces for women. This was followed by a peaceful candlelight march advocating for safer spaces for women and girls.



CLIMATE CHANGE EFFORTS AND WOMEN-LED, GRASSROOT ACTION

On **26-27 November, 2024** home-based worker leaders from Learn Mahila Kamgaar Sanghatana (LMKS), Nasik, Maharashtra went on a collaborative exposure visit to Mahila Housing Trust's project in the town of Amalner, Maharashtra.



Here, they got to engage with the Vikasinis, Community Action Groups (CAGs), water managers and Paryawaran Sakhis who are spearheading leadership action at a grassroots level. They also got to look at the various sustainable innovations that are helping address immediate as well as broader environmental challenges.

On **3-4 December, 2024** home-based worker leaders from our affiliate SAVE, Tiruppur visited Mahila Housing Trust's project site in Bangalore, Karnataka. While there, they got an overview of community based models to tackle the urban impact of climate change.



This initiative gave the visitors a chance to explore various technological innovations, such as solar technology and rainfall harvesting systems that are in place and offered insights into how these solutions create grassroots benefits.



They attended a Vector-Borne Disease (VBD) Drive where awareness campaigns and prevention measures were discussed. At every step, they interacted closely with Community Action Groups (CAGs) and beneficiaries.

The visit wrapped up with meetings with the CAGs to better understand their participatory planning models, and have collaborative discussions on sustainable solutions and techniques.



NEPAL

A POSITIVE THINKING AND STRESS MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP (FOR 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM) WAS CONDUCTED BY WHR.

December, 2024

This impactful workshop on mental health and stress management provided 30 participants with practical tools and techniques to navigate daily stressors. Led by trainers from the Nepal Yoga Institute, the session combined informative presentations, interactive discussions, and engaging activities. Key highlights included exploring the power of positive thinking, understanding the different types of stress and their impact, personalised stress assessments, and practical stress-relief methods like yoga and mindfulness exercises. The workshop's interactive nature, including group activities and experience sharing, ensured participants not only gained valuable knowledge but also practiced effective stress management strategies. Feedback indicated the workshop was highly effective in equipping participants with the skills to improve their mental well-being.



WELCOMING REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF FINLAND AND UN WOMEN NEPAL: PROJECT VISIT HOSTED BY OUR AFFILIATES, SABAH NEPAL

26 November, 2024

SABAH Nepal's project locations at Nala and Panauti in the Kavre district recently welcomed representatives from two of its supporting partners – the Government of Finland and the UN Women. The delegation included Mr. Ville Taivo (Minister of Foreign Trade and Development of Government of Finland), Rinna-Rikka Heikka (Ambassador of Finland to Nepal), advisors and dignitaries from the Government of Finland, as well as representatives from UN Women.

The visit enabled the delegates to witness the on-ground impact of SABAH Nepal's efforts. They explored the vegetable farms under the Farm-To-Table initiative at Nala. They got to know of the skills and leadership development training the women home-based workers receive. They also had a chance to explore the products created by various home-based businesses like pickle-making, agro-farming, and tailoring.

The visit was highly successful, and it wrapped up with a renewed commitment from Mr. Ville Taivo to continue supporting the empowerment of women in the region.



PAKISTAN

WOMEN'S RESISTANCE KNOWS NO BORDERS: A SESSION BY OUR AFFILIATE PARTNERS, HOME-BASED WOMEN WORKERS FEDERATION, PAKISTAN (HBWWF)

25 November, 2024

The International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women marked a special moment this year in Karachi, with HBWWF's seminar – 'Women's Resistance Knows No Borders'.

The event celebrated the contributions of the legendary Dominican revolutionaries, the Butterfly Sisters, and used their example to inspire political and human rights activists and women workers to speak out against the discriminatory laws against women that still exist today. The speakers also called for the enactment of legal measures to ensure protection of women workers against workplace harassment. They made a special mention of the discrimination faced by women factory workers.



NETWORKING



After a successful bilateral meeting with the Honorable Chair of Women's Affairs Commission Ms. Shireen Huq, on 9th December, 2024 in Dhaka.

After a meaningful discussion with Ms. Gitanjali Singh, Country Representative of UN Women Bangladesh, and Ms. Navanita Sinha, Deputy Country Representative.



A memorable moment with the
BEES Network member,
Ms. Shaheen Anam.



An impactful meeting with
Mr. Tanvir Hossain of the BEES
Network.

1 October, 2024:
With Mr. Darren Walker, President
of Ford Foundation in New Delhi.





October, 2024:
An inspiring meeting with
HNI ExCo members in
Bangkok, Thailand.

19 October, 2024:
A meeting with the
Honourable Minister of
Labour, Government of
Thailand.



20 October, 2024:
Celebrating Home-Based
Workers Day with HNI
ExCo members in
Thailand.



25 October, 2024: With our HomeNet South Asia Enforcer, Nepali affiliates and interns at the Beijing +30 Review by NNBN.



27 October, 2024:
Participating at the UN
Women Partner
Roundtable.



27 October, 2024: Our HomeNet South Asia Enforcer and Regional Coordinator with Ms. Christine Arab, Regional Director - UN Women Asia & Pacific and Ms. Patricia Fernandez, Country Representative - UN Women Nepal.



11 November, 2024:
At the Beijing +30 Review
by UN Women in
Kathmandu

11 and 12 December,
2024: Attending the
National Trade
Committee Meeting for
piece-rate home-based
workers, organised by
SEWA in Ahmedabad.



Home Net South Asia Regional
Coordinator and Senior Programme
Coordinator with Home Net South Asia
Advisory Board Member Anisha Ben from
SEWA Ahmedabad.



Our Regional Coordinator with the Home Net South Asia Chair, Ms. Renana Jhabvala, and National Secretary, SEWA, Ms. Manali Shah

19 December, 2024:
At the “LDCs Consultation with Women Home-Based Workers”, organised with the UN Women and SABAH Nepal.



With women home-based workers from different organisations at the same event.



22 December, 2024:
Speaking at the “National Level Networking and Strategy Building Workshop on Ratification of ILO C177”, jointly organised with SABAHA Nepal.





22 December, 2024: With the Honourable Labour Minister of Bagmati Province at the Village Café by SABAHA.




Let's stay in touch!


Follow us on social media

 HomeNet South Asia

 HomeNet South Asia Trust

 HomeNet_SouthAsia

 @HomeNet_SAsia

 @homenetsouthasiatrust

Visit our website to subscribe to our newsletter hnsa.org.in/toolkits-and-newsletters