

## Supply Chain Stakeholder Meeting

### The Hidden Homeworkers Programme – North India Caucus

On the 24th of March this year, we hosted a successful **Supply Chain Stakeholder Meeting -North India Caucus** in Delhi, which brought together various voices of the supply chain for a discussion on improving industry-wide collaboration for the rights of home-based and other informal workers.

The event, held at India International Centre Annexe as well as virtually, showcased informative presentations and two very interesting panel discussions featuring women garment homeworkers from Delhi-NCR and key speakers from the industry. The participants were also able to network with one another, sharing ideas and best practices for improving transparency within the supply chain.



The meeting began with a welcome note from **Alice Oyaró**, Director of International Programmes, Policy and Partnerships, Transform Trade who talked about Transform Trade's [new strategy](#), emphasizing upon how important the forthcoming discussions on homeworkers' issues were. She also said that the voices of women in the Global South should be strengthened.

Plenary Speaker **Chandrima Chatterjee**, Secretary General, Confederation of Indian Textile Industries (CITI), then talked about how India can work towards leveraging the potential of skilled workers who cannot be a part of formal factory work through homeworking. She also said that better monitoring and transparency within the supply chain is the industry's need as much as it is the workers' need.



**Kratika Choubey**, Manager, Business and Human Rights, Transform Trade India then briefed the participants about the Hidden Homeworkers Programme sharing key learnings and challenges so far and encouraged businesses to engage with the programme and shared how it could support them on transparency and traceability of the supply chains through a practical [toolkit](#). **Namita Malik**, Project Coordinator (SEWA) for Hidden Homeworkers Programme then talked about SEWA's role within the programme and highlighted that it is critical to work on the recovery of work opportunities for HWs.

We were also joined by **Rana Alok Singh**, Regional Director South Asia, Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI), who participated virtually and gave the participants a historical context on Homeworking in North India. He shared his learnings from working on ETI's Homeworker Project in Bareilly between 2006-07 and highlighted some best practices. He also expressed his commitment towards bringing together multiple players (especially ETI member brands and their suppliers) to engage on homeworkers' and other informal workers' issues through various ETI platforms such as STITCH or ETI North India Caucus.



After this, the Panel Discussion began and it was chaired by **Lakshmi Bhatia**, Strategic Advisor, Business & Human Rights, Transform Trade India.



The first panel “**Homeworkers’ Voices at the Centre-Stage**” featured women homeworkers and subcontractors from Delhi-NCR who talked about how important homeworking is for them. They said that homeworking provides them income that allows them to run their households and provide for their children. They also collectively raised some demands which included getting work directly from the factory, complete transparency on piece-rate wage, regular work, timely payments, and capacity building through training on piece-rate calculation and better organisation and support (particularly in Kapas Hera and Gurugram areas).

The second panel “**Hearing from the Industry**” featured key voices from the industry. **Mousumi Sarangi**, Country Head, India and Regional Coordinator, Gender at Fair Wear Foundation started the discussion by saying that the working conditions of all stakeholders within the informal sector should be highlighted and improved, emphasizing upon the importance of collectivisation. She also talked about the steps that Fair Wear Foundation has taken to



prepare their member brands for the recent EU legislation on mHRDD and how the Hidden Homeworkers programme supported them in updating their Homeworking Guidelines for their member brands. She also talked about how the STITCH programme which is led by the Fair Wear Foundation aims to improve labour conditions for garment workers will also be working on the labour condition risks for homeworkers. Then, **Vishavjeet Choudhary**, Country head, A4ID said that solutions can only be found when we connect with grassroots level stakeholders and work with a multi-pronged approach bringing together MSIs, CSOs, NGOs, industrialists and workers at the same platform. He also suggested that a Policy Brief should be prepared for the EU stating the ground-level problems along with the possible solutions. **Ranjeeb Sarma**, External Advisor, NCSR International Confederation of Catalytic Change, Former CSR Head, Marks & Spencer and Advisory Board of Emerging Leaders, spoke on how investors can support suppliers, businesses and brands to do the right things and talked about creating multi-stakeholder platforms for dialogue on issues of informal workers, migrant workers, homeworkers particularly women. **Shyam Aggarwal**, Radiant Expovision (Supplier), then said that there should be an overall change in people’s mindsets – trade and business should not just be about profit-making and that brands should collectively work on paying fair wages to their workers which in turn would enhance the workers’ productivity.

Then, **Rakesh Supkar**, Business Head, Transform Trade India summarised what was discussed during the meeting and concluded by saying that the way forward is to keep these conversations ongoing. Overall, the event was a resounding success, underscoring the importance of collaboration and knowledge sharing to achieve transparency within the supply chain. We will be hosting similar events

in other clusters in the future, building on the momentum generated by this year's successful stakeholder meeting.



Hidden Homeworkers is an initiative of the following organisations:



We are also thankful to our event partner Confederation of Indian Textile Industry (CITI) as well as Advocates for International Development (A4ID) for their support in organising this meeting.

