



HomeNet Kenya Launch Statement 10th December, 2020

Greetings:

The HBWs Member organizations and Homeworkers (Present here and across the globe), Partners and Allies: The Kenya Federation for Alternative Trade (KEFAT), The World Fair Trade Organization-Africa and Middle East (WFTO-Africa and Middle East), The SEED Trust, The Kenya National Alliance of Street Vendors and Informal Traders (KENASVIT) ,The Women In Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), The Open Society Foundation (OSF), The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), HomeNet International (HNI), HomeNet South Asia (HNSA), HomeNet South East Asia (HNSEA), The Latin American Network (COTRADO-ALAC), HomeNet Africa (HNA), our Guests from the County Government of Nakuru, National Government: The Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and Enterprise Development (Micro and Small Enterprise Authority-MSEA)and The Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife Management, Ladies and Gentlemen:- on behalf of HomeNet Kenya; **GOOD AFTERNOON and welcome.**

Appreciation

Allow me to appreciate our Supporters (KEFAT, WFTO-Africa and Middle East, WIEGO, HNI and Regional Nets) for the long and tedious journey in identifying the HBWs groups and Homeworkers in Kenya; Supporting the Organizing and Mobilization, Networking, Capacity Building and Solidarity in the midst of Covid-19 challenges. During this period HomeNet Kenya and its allies (KEFAT/WIEGO/OSF/HNI) did distribute humanitarian support (food) to all cluster areas in Kenya. Allow me to also thank The County and National Governments response and honor in joining HomeNet Kenya on this historic day. **To all, we say THANK YOU.**

HomeNet Kenya: - Our Journey

Let me take you through a brief synopsis of how we got here today!

The partnership between KEFAT and WIEGO on the “Trading Our Way Up: Women Organizing for Fair Trade” in 2009; a program aimed at Promoting Gender Equity and Women Empowerment concluded **that women producers have experienced significant progress in meeting their practical and strategic needs through participating in collective forms of enterprise and linking to Fair Trade markets. Across all countries, women reported how organizing in groups for production and trade has strengthened their livelihoods and enabled them to contribute to meeting their families’ material needs, which in turn has enhanced their status in their households and communities. As a result of their achievements, they have greater confidence in their abilities and higher levels of self-esteem, and have developed support networks that they can draw on in times of need.**

The continuous partnership in 2012 on the “Funding Leadership Opportunities for Women: Developing Women Leadership and Business Skills” a program aimed at increasing women’s participation as members and leaders of producer cooperatives, which was to translate into increased equality, fostering increased realization of rights and access to assets, helping women achieve an increase in income through improved design, quality and production techniques. It

also aimed at identification and building contacts with organizations organizing home-based workers and identification of what products or processes the home-based workers are making/involved in and for which markets **brought forth the realization that members of /and the Fair-Trade organizations and their supplier groups and individuals were Homebased Workers and Homeworkers.**

Homebased Work; HBWs

Ladies and gentlemen; home-based workers are those who do paid work within their homes or the surrounding grounds. They produce goods for local or global value chains and are of two basic categories.

- **Self-employed home-based workers: -Assume all the risks of being independent operators.**
- **Sub-contracted home-based workers (called homeworkers): - Are contracted by individual entrepreneurs or firms, often through an intermediary.**

In both categories, these workers deal with low incomes, irregular and/or cancelled work orders, unreliable supply of raw materials, delayed payment, and rejected goods.

HBWs with Supporters and Partners managed to present a strong case for recognition and in 1996, the ILO passed the Home Work Convention, 1996 (No. 177), calling for equality of treatment between homeworkers and other wage earners, taking into account the special characteristics of home work. Specifically, the Convention and its accompanying Home Work Recommendation, 1996 (No. 184), called for the promotion of equality of treatment in relation to:

- a) The homeworkers' right to establish or join organizations of their own choosing and to participate in the activities of such organizations;**
- b) Protection against discrimination in employment and occupation;**
- c) Protection in the field of occupational safety and health;**
- d) Remuneration;**
- e) Statutory social security protection;**
- f) Access to training;**
- g) Minimum age for admission to employment or work; and**
- h) Maternity protection.**

The ILO in its April 2020 brief estimated that 7.9% of the world's workforce worked from home on a permanent basis prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, or approximately 260 million workers and for most of history, working from home has been the norm. Until the last century, most production was home-based, with families producing goods for their own consumption or as a source of income, in what have been commonly referred to as cottage industries. With industrialization, working from home did not disappear, but rather was subsumed within production, with tasks most amenable to parsing often outsourced to "homeworkers." Homeworkers differed from the independent artisans of cottage industries, in that, while home-based, they produced a product or service, as specified by the employer or intermediary, for remuneration.

Back here at home! The Kenyan HBWs are to be found in the commercial crafts, textile and Garment Sectors; specialization inherent on raw materials and traditional skills.

You are all invited to walk through a preview of the works of our hands as presented at the side exhibition.

- ✓ Kisii- soapstone carvings
- ✓ Machakos-sisal baskets and wood carvings
- ✓ Turkana-Duom laundry baskets and trays
- ✓ Narok- beadwork (ushanga)
- ✓ Laikipia- beadwork (ushanga)
- ✓ Kajiado-beadwork (ushanga)
- ✓ Bungoma-pottery, mats, baskets
- ✓ Kisumu- plastic woven baskets, jewellery, hyacinth products
- ✓ Nairobi- Assorted (Fashion/Textiles and Upcycling)
- ✓ Nakuru-Assorted (Fashion/Textiles and Upcycling)
- ✓ Nandi- Assorted Fashion and Textiles
- ✓ Uasin Gishu- Assorted Fashion and Textiles
- ✓ Elgeyo-Marakwet- Knitting
- ✓ Baringo- beadwork (ushanga)
- ✓ Kakamega- Mats, Baskets, Pottery

The Informal Economy

Ladies and gentlemen; World Bank studies indicate that Kenya's informal sector is large and dynamic with 95 percent of the country's businesses and entrepreneurs found here; inclusive the HBWs; **indeed, we are the TRUE HUSTLERS.** We are honored to have the Micro and Small Enterprise Authority (MSEA) in our midst; we appreciate the herculean task you perform in ensuring that favorable policies on the sector are developed and implemented, mobilization of resources for the development of the sector and promotion of markets for the same. **Consider HomeNet Kenya an ally and partner on the same!**

Ladies and gentlemen; the HBWs and those in the informal sector face both institutional and structural challenges especially in the following key areas;

- **Voice:** Limited representation in policy making and rules development.
- **Visibility:** The collection and collation of official statistics around the sector is often non conclusive for proper evaluation to aid effective policy and decision making.
- **Validity:** Overall recognition of the informal sector actors as legitimate economic agents who contribute to the overall economy significantly.

Indeed honest, robust and persistent partnership with HomeNet Kenya, Allies, Partners, the County and National Governments will see a change in the way home work and homeworkers are perceived, strengthened, supported, encouraged and enabled for economic prosperity, bestowment of dignity and respect and relied upon leading to the **realization of the United Nations adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals.**

We therefore, look forward to the following;

1. Participation/collaboration in County and National Government sector specific activities.
2. Representation at policy development forums/stakeholder meetings/committees and **most so ratification of ILO Conventions on HBWs**
3. Acknowledgement that homework and working at home is an “enterprise”.
4. Development and deployment of business and social surveys contain the “home” as a place of work.
5. Social protection, occupational health and safety for the informal economy and most so for HBWs are matched to those of the formal sector.

Once more; Thank You So Much for Gracing the Launch of HomeNet Kenya!
