

Fair Trade Trade Fair Trade Trade Fair Trade

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**FAIR TRADE FOR HOMEBASED WORKERS
AMIDST CLIMATE CHANGE**

Fair Trade is an economic partnership based on dialogue, transparency, and respect. It creates opportunities for economically and socially marginalized producers. It helps develop transparent and accountable relationships between buyers and sellers in the international trading system. It enhances and develops capacity of producers while at the same time supporting safe and empowering working conditions. It promotes gender equity and social protection for workers while helping to eliminate child labor. Equally important is that it cultivates environmental stewardship and respect for cultural identity as well as care for natural resources.

Fair Trade embraces a holistic development approach because it creates a long-term impact on producers while delivering better products to the public, thus contributing to the development of communities. Producers are able to access basic resources and services from the higher returns on their earnings derived from a fair trade environment. Fair prices for quality products entail lower cost because of the elimination of middlemen; thus producers enjoy greater profit for their products. Patronizing fair trade products can also contribute significantly to address the adverse impacts and threats of climate change especially on homebased workers in terms of production, raw materials sourcing, livelihood and income opportunities, and generating green jobs.

Homebased workers are very capable of producing products using raw materials that are environmental friendly. The innovativeness of HBWs in creating products out of recyclable materials has been amply shown many times. Demonstrating the use of "green products" will be beneficial to women homebased workers considering the gender issues and concerns related to calamities and disasters. Such issues and concerns also need to be addressed in the context of Homenet Southeast Asia's continuing campaign for inclusive and comprehensive social protection including occupational safety and health.

Women homebased workers especially those in poverty tend to rely more than men on natural resources to produce various products to earn a living. Women in the informal economy including HBWs are the ones mostly affected by adverse consequences related to climate change because their raw materials, such as fiber for textile weaving, are derived from agricultural produce. Communities that are engaged in fiber production and dependent on other crops to produce various crafts need to increase their adaptive capabilities especially on climate sensitive resources such as water and to natural outbreaks such as insect infestations. Changes in temperature and rainfall patterns directly affect crop yields, livelihoods and economic activities of communities engaged in various productive activities including those for their own household needs. Coping strategies to address changing women's needs and priorities may be learned and adopted from HBWs from participating Homenets. Their involvement in developing new technologies that are user-friendly, effective, sustainable and appropriate for women HBWs can be highlighted in the context of fair trade.

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**Creating Solidarity Economy
to ensure decent work conditions
for homebased workers in Southeast Asia**

17-20 October 2011

Montreal, Canada

Poonsap S. Tulaphan

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Poonsap S. Tulaphan represented HomeNet Southeast Asia and had a chance to share experiences of member countries of HNSEA working toward this goal with others in the International Forum on the Social and Solidarity Economy held on 17-20 October 2011 at Montreal, Quebec, Canada. There were more than 1,000 participants comprising of promoters, researchers, funders, NGOs, government officials, civil society organizations, and social movements from Quebec, Canada and more than 50 countries from the Americas, Africa, Europe and Asia who shared their experiences in the forum. Experiences of citizens from Montreal in creating solidarity economy through numbers of projects were shared with visitors through a study trip. Workshop sharing regarding labor issues came up that workers in formal system and workers in informal economy need to support each other to create a Solidarity Economy Society. There are a number of activities that need to be further developed such as organizing workers in informal economy, raise their voice, visibility and validity, creating linkages between formal and informal workers and linking them with consumers and government projects.*



As employment and production is predominantly governed by globalized and liberalized trade and while pricing and production processes are practiced under market mechanisms, informal workers still have access to work, but it cannot be considered decent work because the workers have no power to bargain for fair wages and improve their working conditions to enhance their quality of life. In such a system, workers are considered as a production factor. Their dignity is not respected so are their economic and social rights to attain a better quality of life. Informal workers should not be confined in such an economic and trade system. Better alternatives should be provided to enhance their work and livelihood.

“Solidarity Economy” is based on mutual help. Its primary goal is not profitability, but to serve producers, communities and consumers. Through participation of stakeholders and democratic means, it strives to strengthen and increase bargaining power of the vulnerable groups. It provides for an economy in which all parties shall be involved in acting and thinking together for the better quality of life of all. The essential basis to make possible Solidarity Economy is self-sufficient production and consumption and refraining from mutual exploitation. The new way of living together under this economy should rest on fairness, participation, non-exploitation, and tolerance. Cooperatives organizing and other form of cooperation between consumers, producers and government agencies created around the world to cope with the problem.

HOMENET PHILIPPINES

After four years of working together, the 27 informal workers' organizations under the Homenet Philippines decided to formalize the network by holding its founding congress last May 6, 2011. The past years, Homenet Philippines has proved its capacity to respond to issues faced by the homebased and other informal workers such as its active involvement in the passage of the Magna Carta for Workers in Informal Employment (MACWIE) bill. Currently, the network is represented in the NEDA Sub-Committee on Social Protection through PATAMABA and in the National Tripartite Advisory Council (NTAC) where issues of informal workers were pushed leading to the signing by trade union federations and centers on the resolution for the ratification of ILOC177 on Homework. The formalization of the network is an expression of the commitment and solidarity of its member-organizations to continue fighting for the interests of informal workers at the local, national and international levels.

The official delegates who attended the Congress adopted the Constitution and By-Laws and elected the members of the National Council. The historic occasion was also attended by representatives coming from the Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP), Social Security System (SSS), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Center for Labor Justice (CLJ), the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) and the Office of Representative Angara who all expressed support to the issues of informal workers.

ECOP Sr Adviser for International Affairs Mr Joey Molina expressed their support to the informal workers particularly homeworkers, being once a homemaker himself. Atty. Dolfie Tobias-Shalim, Head of the Social Technology Bureau of DSWD read the message of Secretary Corazon “Dinky” Soliman. In her message, the Secretary stated that DSWD and Homenet can work together in creating awareness to protect HBWs as well as lobby for policies and legislation particularly the ratification of ILO C177. Ms. Leian Marasigan of CLJ, on behalf of Prof. Rene Ofreneo, expressed support in pushing for the passage of MACWIE and for the ratification of the ILO C177. Ms. Nora Mercado, Department Head, Self Employed Voluntary Members Program Management Department (SEVMPMD), in her solidarity message said that SSS is pursuing their reach to the informal sector. The message from Chairperson Remy Rikken of the PCW emphasized solidarity of the Philippine Commission on Women in celebration of the informal workers' day and in the campaign for the ratification of the ILO C177. Teddy Nono from the Office of Congressman Angara extended the latter's congratulations to Homenet Philippines and assures their support to the cause of all informal workers.

In the said activity, Rhoda Avila of DSWP who was later elected as the Chair of the Legislative and Advocacy Committee, updated the body on the status of the MACWIE Bill.



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