

HomeNet Nepal Celebrates Labor Day

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As usual, HNN observed 121st International Labor Day 2010 in Kathmandu by conducting various innovative programs. Due to an unforeseen situation created by the General Strike called by Maoists from the 1st May, HNN organized various activities on 30th April instead of 1st May.



This year, HNN focused specially upon the ratification of Convention 177 of ILO and promulgation of proposed policy on hbws. For this, HNN selected Khokana

Village of Lalitpur. Khokana is one of the craft and cultural village (urban focused village) where at least 50% of the total population are found to be home based workers. The theme of the program was '**Roadmap (Journey) from Khokana to Geneva**'. Fourteen years ago the ILO head office convened and had chartered the Convention 177 on Home Work. Nepal is one of the signatory of the convention but has not ratified c. 177 yet. Thus, to press the government and ILO for the ratification of c. 177, HNN from the Labor day, 2010 has initiated its signature campaign from Khokana which it will submit the government of Nepal and ILO Head Office possibly next year.

HNN had taken a decision to ignite the engine to ratify ILO Convention 177 on the auspicious occasion of the May Day, 2010. It selected Khokna VDC which not only is bestowed with HNN's cluster, but the entire village is embedded with Home Based

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Workers. In every nook and corner of Khokna one comes across HBW mostly women spinning cloth in their traditional looms. Khokna is enshrined with heritage monuments and ancient relics. It demonstrates a strong and committed cultural heritage.



The program has been convened by HNN in collaboration with its MBO Hamro Chinari, Khokna Mahila Jagaran Samnathan and Bamboo Based HBW Union. The program was initiated by

organizing a street rally which went round the streets of Khokna starting from the Bus Park and concluded at the VDC building. The program was formally inaugurated by Mr. Dulal Maharjan the oldest man of the village who had chaired the open –street program. The street rally was joined by a large contingent of HBW and local communities who held placards delivering the message towards ratification of C177 and demanding the rights and social security of HBW.



The entire VDC participated in the event and joined the rallies till the VDC building. After the rally's reached the VDC, HNN had organized street drama. The first Street drama concentrated

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on the nature of social protection HNN would be able to provide the HBW. The second street drama focused on how visibility could be provided through networking and organizing.

The event was followed by Signature campaign. The entire contingent who participated in the street rally they all put their commitment towards ratification of C177 by inscribing their signature.

The signature campaign was followed by interaction forum at the VDC complex. The interaction forum was moderated by HNN Program Officer Ms.Sabitra Neupane who had taken the entire role of organizing the Labor Day events. The program opened with an address by the HBW Ms.Bhagwati Shrestha who shed light on the drudgery being faced by the women in the Informal sector and strongly demanded that issues HBW needs to be protected from labor exploitation and fare wages needs to be regulated even within the informal sector.



Representing the VDC Mr. Rabindra Shrestha addressed the forum. He raised very interesting queries in the course of his deliberation. He congratulated HNN for taking such a big

responsibility of taking up the issue of ratification of C177. He extended best wishes for its accomplishment. He expressed that even within the formal sector even though basic minimum wages are to be enforced it is not sincerely regulated. He also expressed a program of this nature being undertaken by the HNN needs to be

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closely coordinated with the local entities and the local entitled needs to be informed and made to participate in such program. It would give impetus to both the parties if such coordination is maintained. He also suggested to accomplish such a lofty goal HNN would require incessant support from the political party's right from the grassroots till the central level.

The second phase of the program was to felicitate the newly elected members of HNN. All the members except for four who could not join the felicitation program were felicitated.

Executive Director Mr. Om Thapaliya threw highlight of the program and appraised the forum about the intrinsic objective of the program being organized. He expressed that such an auspicious event had taken place in Khokana; we need to initiate the registration of HBW at the VDC from Khokna itself. On the occasion, the representative of Khokana VDC shown their commitment to start data base on hbws in Khokana VDC officially first time in Nepal.



The program was addressed by the President of HNN Mr. Diwaker Chand. He basically urged the HBW to raise their voice right from the grassroots level and resound it at the centre. The

signature campaign shall be used as an efficacious instrument to awaken the government and urge them to ratify the ILO Convention 177. He also strongly expressed that the National Policies for the HBW which has been shelved by the government needs to be rejuvenated. We are now prepared to undertake the

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responsibilities. The effort would culminate at the National Convention of the HBW which is being organized by HNN amidst a special event on September 2010.

The floor was opened for interaction. In the course of interaction very relevant and significant issues and observation were made by the participants. From the participants a teacher stated that although he representing a literate group he had till date not heard of HBW and was not familiar with the terminology. The second interesting query raised was by a VDC representative from adjoining VDC. He queried as to why the ILO C was not ratified even after ten years of existence of HNN and its endeavor? He queried as to who are the stake holders responsible for impending the ratification of such a significant document which would envision direct benefit to the HBW? The second query raised by him was if HNN claims to have strength of 25000 members it is already eligible to be a Trade Union? The queries were collectively answered and responded by the President and the Executive Director. Ms. Apsara Dongol the chairperson of Khokana Mahila Jagaran Samaj and Treasurer of HNN delivered the vote of thanks. The participants were served with traditional ethnic meal.

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