

ILO CONVENTION 177 ON HOME WORK AND WHY IT SHOULD BE RATIFIED



1. Convention 177 relates to Homeworkers and Home Work – who are they?

Homeworkers are part of a broader category of workers called **homebased workers**. It is the location or place of work that characterizes homebased workers.

There are two main types of homebased workers. (i) sub-contracted or piece rate workers and contributing family members also referred to as **homeworkers**, engaged in the production of goods and services for the market in their homes or in nearby areas. They could be contracted by a firm, an individual entrepreneur, traders, subcontractors or other intermediaries and are usually given the raw materials and are paid a stated amount per piece produced. These workers do not have any direct contact with the markets for the goods they produce. Convention 177 addresses the needs and concerns of this category of workers, ie. homeworkers. (ii) 'Own account workers' who are self-employed and buy their own raw materials and are generally in direct contact with the market.



2. When was the ILO Convention 177 adopted by ILC and how many countries have ratified it?

The Home Work Convention (C177) was adopted on 20th June 1996, at the 83rd session of the ILC. As of December 2015, only ten countries, i.e. Albania (in 2002), Argentina (in 2006), Belgium (in 2012), Bosnia and Herzegovina (in 2010), Bulgaria (in 2009), Finland (in 1998), Ireland (in 1999), Netherlands (in 2002), Tajakistan (in 2012) and Macedonia (in 2012) have ratified it.

3. What are the salient features of C177 on Home Work?

Some salient features are :

- The Convention applies to all persons doing work from home for remuneration and is not confined to any sector or region.

- Each country that ratifies C177 will have to formulate, adopt and implement a National Policy on Home Work, aimed at
- improving the condition of home workers, in a consultative manner.
The National Policy on Home Work shall promote equality of treatment between home workers and other workers.
- Equality of treatment shall be promoted, in particular, in relation to :
 - a. The home workers right to establish or join organisations of their choice and participate in their activities;
 - b. Protection against discrimination in employment and occupation;
 - c. Protection in the field of occupational safety and health;
 - d. With regard to remuneration;
 - e. Statutory social security protection;
 - f. Access to training;
 - g. Minimum age for admission to employment or work; and
 - h. Maternity protection.
- The National Policy shall be implemented through laws, regulations, collective agreements, arbitration awards or other national practices.
- Labour statistics should include home work.
- A system of inspection and regular reporting is mandatory.
- Adequate remedies, including penalties in case of violations, shall be provided for and effectively applied.

4. Why should countries ratify C177? What is in it for Governments, homeworkers and employers?

a. Seven good reasons why C177 should be ratified by governments are :

1. ILO Convention C177 is a **global norm setting law** and provides global yardsticks, helping countries to be in tune with global norms of decent work for all and core labour standards.
2. For countries that profess **equality**, C177 provides a blue print for equality of treatment between home workers and other workers.
3. Homeworkers who are the most marginalized and exploited of all workers are at the bottom of value chains and any **welfare state** needs to address their concerns.
4. As homework is an important part of the growing **informal economy** world wide, ratification of C177 will mean that it will be **regulated** and workers ensured of basic remuneration and social security.
5. Since homeworkers are from poor communities, particularly in South Asia, ratifying C177 and improving the living and working conditions of homeworkers will greatly strengthen the fight against **poverty**.
6. By ratifying C177, countries will demonstrate **solidarity** with an important group of informal workers and that they are supportive of informal workers, especially, the most marginalized **women workers**.
7. By ratifying C177, the member state will be able to show **solidarity with United Nations** and other agencies in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and will act as global declaration of its commitment to justice and gender equality.

b. For home workers and their organizations ratification of C177 is important because:

1. It means recognition as workers and contributors to national economies.
2. It will lay the foundation for a comprehensive National Policy on Home-workers, which will improve the lives and livelihoods of home-workers.
3. It will ensure minimum labour standards and minimum standards of occupational safety and health as well as social protection, thereby promoting equality of treatment between all workers.
4. It will help them to know who they are actually working for, where they are located in the value chain of production and thus where they can voice their concerns and demands.
5. The National Policy formulated as a consequence of ratification of C177, will provide them with training and skill-upgradation and a tool for advocacy and negotiations.
6. It will reduce gender inequalities as most home workers are women and once given their due, they will be better respected and appreciated in the family and the community.
7. In view of the global nature of supply chains, ratification of C177 will help improve global ethics so that the developed nations do not take advantage of cheap labour from the developing world.
8. By addressing the concerns of homeworkers through C177, the conditions of other home-based workers (including self employed/own account workers) will also be highlighted and protection extended to them.

c. Employers also gain by

1. Being able to demonstrate that they are supporting an 'ethical and fair labour arrangement.'
2. By being able to show solidarity with United Nations and other global players in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and will be a declaration of their commitment to justice and gender equality.
3. Once the National Policy on Homeworkers is put in place and implemented, as a result of ratification of C177, it will lead to better skilled and protected homeworkers in the value chain, which will in turn lead to higher productivity.
4. Since C177 will mandate the implementation of minimum labour standards and protection for homeworkers globally, competition will be reduced.
5. Once C177 is ratified and implemented, employers will be able to demonstrate their sense of justice in treating regular workers and homeworkers equally.
6. They will also be able to demonstrate their gender sensitivity as most homeworkers are women.
7. Once poverty is reduced due to proper implementation of C177, it will create a more conducive safer and healthier environment for business.



HomeNet South Asia Group (HNSA) comprises HomeNet South Asia Trust and the Association of Homebased Workers in South Asia. It is the regional network of organizations of homebased workers. It currently has a presence in 8 countries of South Asia. It works towards building regional solidarity among homebased workers, especially women workers, and empowers them to lead a life of dignity that is free of poverty by obtaining decent work and social protection within a rights based framework. HNSA Group strives to make homebased workers and their issues more visible, to ensure secure livelihoods for them and to strengthen their collective voice and organizing efforts in the region. It also advocates for the implementation of national, regional and international policies for homebased workers; inclusion of homebased workers in the existing policies and laws, as well as promotes access to homebased workers product to local, national, regional and international markets. For more information visit www.homenetsouthasia.net

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