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Gram Bharati Samiti

Item 7 Applications requesting inclusion in the list provided for in rule 77 of the rules of procedure of the Board.

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GRAM BHARATI SAMITI (GBS)

(Society for Rural Development)

- Special Consultative Status with UN ECOSOC
- Accredited with UNCCD and UNEP

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Statement by Gram Bharati Samiti (GBS), India

Mr. Chair, Excellencies,

At the outset we express our gratitude for including Gram Bharati Samiti (GBS) in the UNCTAD CSO family. Gram Bharati Samiti (GBS) as a NGO registered under charitable act has been engaged in serving the women entrepreneurs, artisans, farmers and landless labors, especially of backward castes and classes in India for past 30 years.

GBS has formed 710 Self Help Groups (SHG) involving over 7,000 rural women in 52 villages, provided 230 with vocational training in different trades .e. weaving carpet and durry (cotton mats), making shoes and bangles, dairy, embroidery, polishing jewels etc. Two hundred of them have established their own household units and are earning livelihood sustainably. Ms. Kusum Jain, Secretary, GBS was conferred with an Award for **'Women's Creativity in Rural Life'** (Giving hope to the helpless) by Women's World Summit Foundation, Geneva on performing outstanding work for welfare of the rural women.

While working with the women entrepreneurs it is a matter of concern that worryingly, India's rapid urbanization has not yet encouraged more women to join the labor force. Rural jobs have been decreasing and not enough rural women have been able to make the transition to working in urban areas.

India ranks 120 among 131 countries in female labor force participation and rates of gender-based violence remain unacceptably high. It's hard to develop in an inclusive and sustainable way when half of the population is not fully participating in the economy. At 17% of GDP, the economic contribution of Indian women is less than half the global average. India could boost its growth by 1.5 percentage points to 9% per year if around 50% of women could join the work force.

It is an opportune time to revisit and reform outdated legislation and policies that act as deterrents to women entering or staying in the labor market. Fostering the creation of better jobs, providing support for child and elder care, and ensuring mobility to and from work can remove significant structural barriers for women to access employment.

Employers need to walk the talk and commit to supporting diversity in the workplace by hiring women and paying them the same wages as men for similar jobs. We need safe transportation and zero tolerance of sexual harassment in the office. The private sector should take a leading role in expanding women's share of employment and firm ownership in emerging industries.

We can accelerate progress by working together. Gender-focused planning is more effective when it's incorporated into everything that we do. Today the World Bank thinks about gender based development in a range of areas and incorporates it in our project design and implementation across different areas.



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People look vigorously at the pledge that “no one will be left behind”, which encapsulates the essence of the post-2015 agenda. But in fact it sounds that no goal will be considered met unless it is met for everyone—or almost, in the final hours of this hard-fought issue, language on the goals being met for “all social and economic groups” was watered down to “all segments of society”, reflecting a refusal from some governments to recognize the rights of LGBT people.

Trade agreements may provide benefits to people who have the capacity to capitalize on new market opportunities and workers classified as "highly skilled." However, as women are less likely to hold large amounts of capital, are most commonly engaged in the informal sector, are less likely to have secure land rights and are more likely to benefit from public expenditure in health, education, water and energy, trade agreements have a discriminatory effect. In addition, trade agreements expose a large majority of the global population to violations of their human rights.

Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which covers China, India, member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand, will impact a larger number of people than any previously proposed trade agreement. RCEP covers traditional trade issues including trade in goods, services and agriculture, customs, tariffs and trade subsidies, but this represents only a small portion of the agreement. The agreement goes far beyond trade and seeks to impose an entire regulatory framework on member states that could dictate the extent to which governments can regulate every part of the economy in which the private sector operates. The chapters extend to intellectual property, standards and labeling, telecommunications, competition policies, financial services, e-commerce governance and, more recently, government procurement.

We would like to draw your kind attention towards the principle of international cooperation as enshrined in the UN Charter and the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties and extend their support to the people of the developing countries, especially the women sympathetically bearing in mind their status in comparison to the multinational corporations and investors.

Also, we would like to request member states to ensure protection of human rights of the women of backward castes and classes from adverse impact of trade and investment rules and strengthen entrepreneurship among them in developing countries.

We look forward to the global trade rules supporting trade systems based on solidarity, mutual cooperation and appropriate trade processes. We collaboratively could make sure protection of democratic rights and participation of the poor, marginalized and impacted people, particularly the women in decision making process.

Yours sincerely,

Bhawani Shanker Kusum
President