

Gender and Trade: Special focus on the Social and Gender Implications of the EU-India FTA (A Brainstorming Workshop)

26th March 2008, New Delhi

Workshop organized by Heinrich Böll Foundation (India) in collaboration with WIDE-Network Women in Development Europe (Brussels) & South Asia Institute (New Delhi)

Context:

Most economic policy decision makers still hold the view that trade liberalization is gender, class and race neutral and generates benefit for all. However, trade liberalization has different impacts on women and men due to their different control over resources, and access to decision-making as well as their gendered economic roles and gendered power relations in society. Till date most economic policy decision makers have paid little attention to understand the links between trade policy and gender relations and consequently to take measures to develop fair and gender sensitive trade rules.

In the context of the current proliferation of bilateral and regional free trade agreements there is an urgent need to go beyond 'strategic economic gains' statements and critically analyse how social and human development concerns are addressed in the FTA deliberations. Critical reviews of sector wise strengths and weaknesses, costs and benefits to gender and on those engaged in the informal sector should be undertaken. Sectoral analysis of these constituencies should be a pertinent criterion in the upcoming Sustainability Impact Assessment.

The potential areas of civil society interventions have to be explored, strategies that ensure more transparency of the negotiations to be devised and a comprehensive monitoring mechanism of the FTA (civil society FTA watch) put in place.

Workshop Objectives:

This second day of the workshop is envisaged as a brainstorming meeting between a select group of resource people and participants from CSOs. It is attempted through this platform to develop ideas and proactive strategies to influence the EU-India FTA from a social and gender justice perspective.

The workshop attempts the following:

- Provide a forum to explore the EU-India-FTA from a gender perspective
- Create a group of well informed civil society actors who will address the gender connotations in bilateral trade negotiations of India
- Identify key sectors and issues from a gender perspective
- Explore areas of civil society intervention and related strategies
- Propose benchmarks for a Gender and Trade Programme for HBF-India which has a special focus on the EU-India FTA

HBF India - WIDE Collaboration (with support from South Asia Institute)

HBF India and WIDE (supported by South Asia Institute) in close collaboration with Indian and EU Partners are initiating an awareness raising and advocacy project "Gender and Social Justice

Relations of the EU-India Trade relations” that aims to influence and shape the EU-India trade relations in such a way that they are consistent with women’s rights, are socially just as well as environmentally sustainable.

The present workshop is part of a series of awareness creating measures that will be undertaken in the following year in both India and Europe. We hope to be able to create alliances and forge partnerships with like-minded stakeholders/actors that participate in this event.

About: Heinrich Böll Foundation
(The Green political Foundation)

The Heinrich Böll Foundation is part of the Green political movement that has developed worldwide as a response to the traditional politics of socialism, liberalism and conservatism. Our main tenets are ecology and sustainability, democracy and human rights, self-determination and justice. We place particular emphasis on gender democracy meaning social emancipation and equal rights for women and men. We are also committed to equal rights for cultural and ethnic minorities and to the societal and political participation of immigrants. Finally, we promote non-violence and proactive peace policies.

To achieve our goals, we seek strategic partnerships with others who share our values. We are an independent organization, that is, we determine our own priorities and policies. We are based in the Federal Republic of Germany, yet we are an international actor in both ideal and practical terms. The India office has been operational since 2002 in New Delhi.

About: WIDE – Network Women In Development Europe

WIDE is an European network of women’s organizations, development NGOs, gender specialists, human rights’ and social activists, established in 1985. WIDE is composed of eleven national platforms and one regional platform with a secretariat based in Brussels, Belgium and has strong links to partners in the global South. WIDE monitors and influences international economic and development policy and practice from a feminist perspective. Through information dissemination of our research and analysis, lobbying and advocacy, networking and capacity building, WIDE promotes gender equality and social justice worldwide.

WIDE has a well-established approach to the trade-development-gender nexus. As a European based network WIDE is especially focusing on the role the EU is playing in this global trade and development scenario.