

THE DELHI DECLARATION FOR WOMEN COOPERATORS

14 December 2022

We 100 women cooperators from 18 states of India¹, resolve to strengthen our solidarity and promote inclusive growth by promoting and strengthening women's cooperatives and women's leadership in the cooperative movement by undertaking the following:

1. Organise rural and urban women workers, especially those in the informal economy, into cooperatives for livelihood with social protection

- Undertake economic activities that are identified by women including agriculture, animal husbandry, crafts and other production, services, savings and credit, trading and manual labour, among others.
- Link women in cooperatives with government and other programmes and services to strengthen their livelihoods thereby supporting women's economic empowerment.
- Ensure social protection of women in cooperatives, thereby supporting their economic empowerment by facilitating linkages with government and private social protection and social security providers.

2. Facilitate and provide access to financial services, including working capital and insurance

- Ensure a suitable and affordable stream of finance for women's cooperatives through the public and private sector.
- Insure women cooperators, their businesses, machines and equipment by facilitating

¹ 100 women cooperators from 18 states of India met in New Delhi on 13-14 Dec 2022 at the National Workshop for Women Cooperators titled *Strengthening Solidarity: Enabling Women Cooperatives and Collective Enterprises to Thrive*, jointly organised by SEWA Cooperative Federation, SEWA Bharat, National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI), and International Cooperative Alliance, Asia-pacific (ICA-AP) at NCUI.)

linkages with insurance companies

- Provide financial literacy and financial management training to women cooperators to strengthen and grow their businesses

3. Provide cooperative education and awareness on the cooperative model as a means of livelihood and social protection

- Educate women workers on the values and principles of cooperatives. · Create awareness on the potential of cooperatives and the means by which they can provide livelihoods and social protection for women, build social solidarity and have social and economic impact at local, national and global levels.

4. Provide programmes and courses for capacity-building and strengthening leadership

- Develop appropriate training modules with women cooperators, and as per their needs.
- Develop a cadre of grassroot trainers with experience of working in cooperatives to provide hands-on and appropriate training.
- Provide opportunities for peer learning through exposure programmes, tailor-made courses and mentoring.
- Provide digital literacy training to bridge the gender digital divide and enable online marketing and other business linkages.

5. Advocate for appropriate laws, policies and programmes that promote women's cooperatives and their collective entrepreneurship

- Collect gender-disaggregated, state-wise data on cooperatives and make it available at the state and national level, to enable cooperative to cooperative trade.
- Create an enabling environment for ease of doing business by simplifying registration procedures, enabling creation and registration of innovative cooperatives, engaged in non-traditional economic activities, simplifying and streamlining compliance and reporting systems through a consultative process with women cooperators.
- Include 'cooperatives' in the definition of 'startup' to encourage business activities through cooperative models and enable them to receive funds and tax exemptions.
- Provide tax moratorium for women's cooperatives up to Rs 20 Crore turnover.

- Developing a 'Women's Cooperative Enterprise Development Fund' to enable capitalisation and business development. The process to access support from this fund should be simple and should be prepared in consultation with cooperatives and their federations.
- Ensure that legislation and regulation of cooperatives and their federations, protect the cooperative's autonomy and promote independent decision-making
- Promote and facilitate marketing of products and services of women's cooperatives, both online and offline, through preferential procurement policies, waiving of deposit monies, capacity-building to navigate the current systems and simplifying these.
- Provide preferential distributorship of agricultural inputs to women's agricultural cooperatives/FPOs to enable them to procure these at lower prices and compete in the market.
- Invest in women's cooperatives and enable access to financial services at affordable rates, and provide support to actually obtain finance like loans and working capital, and insurance.
- Provide permanent spaces to women cooperatives in high tourist footfall areas to enable them to access markets beyond their local areas.
- Develop Women's Enterprise Support Services to provide comprehensive business development services to women's cooperatives through one window.
- Support and enable digitization of women's cooperatives and organise digital literacy to bridge the gender digital divide.
- Increase representation of women cooperators in cooperative boards, especially in those undertaking economic activities like farming conducted predominantly by women, executive committees of cooperative federations and in national and international cooperative forums.
- Ensure a special role for women cooperators and women's cooperatives in disaster and emergency situations, by involving them in planning and implementation of all programmes and services for immediate relief and longer-term rehabilitation and resilience-building.
- Encourage research on, by and for women's cooperatives.
- Link women's cooperatives pro-actively with all new initiatives like the proposed

cooperative university and export of their products and services.

- Link women's cooperatives and their Federations with the G-20 processes, showcase their contributions to the Indian and global economy, and facilitate preferential procurement of their cooperatives' products and services, including export orders.



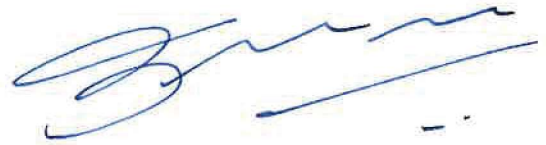
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