

For Immediate Release

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Ela Bhatt, Founder of Self-Employed Womens' Association in India to Speak at the Yale Center for International and Area Studies

April 15, 2002. New Haven, CT ❖ Ela Bhatt, founder of the Self-Employed Womens' Association (SEWA) and the SEWA bank for women in India, will be the speaker at the Annual Gandhi Lecture on Thursday, April 18. Her talk, entitled "From Independence to Freedom: A Struggle of Poor Self-Employed Women Workers in India," will be held at 4pm, Luce Hall Auditorium, 34 Hillhouse Avenue, New Haven, CTticut. It is sponsored by the South Asian Studies Council of the Yale Center for International and Area Studies.

Ela Bhatt is the founder of SEWA, a trade union with 100,000 members, all of which are women who produce and process goods on the floors of their huts, who sell their wares on streets and sidewalks, and who sell their labor cheap. Through SEWA, the women engaged in such microenterprises have gained access to technology, training, education, credit, information, health insurance and legal advice.

In order to meet their need for credit, Bhatt lead SEWA to form a cooperative bank in 1974 with a share capital of \$30,000. Today the SEWA Cooperative Bank has \$1.5 million in working capital and more than 30,000 depositors with a loan return rate of 94 percent.

The Annual Gandhi Lecture was established in 1990 to provide an opportunity each year to examine ideas or social actions inspired by the life and work of Mahatma Gandhi which includes tolerance, non-violence, truth, constructive social programs, education and politics, among others.

The Yale Center for International and Area Studies (YCIAS) is Yale University's principal agency for encouraging and coordinating teaching and research on international affairs, societies and cultures around the world. YCIAS seeks to make understanding the world outside the borders of the U.S., and America's role in the world, an integral part of the liberal education and professional training at Yale University. YCIAS includes twenty research and educational programs, specializing in interdisciplinary and problem-oriented comparative studies.

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