

# BUILDING SOCIAL PROTECTION FLOORS WITH THE ILO TOGETHER, TO CHANGE MILLIONS OF LIVES IN NEED OF MATERNITY PROTECTION AND PATERNITY SUPPORT



International  
Labour  
Organization

## ADEQUATE PROTECTION FOR MOTHERS

Safe maternity is at the core of life itself. However, the birth of a child may not always be the happy event that it should be, as many women and their babies face threats to their health and economic security. Maternity protection provides an income guarantee that allows women to rest at home before and after giving birth. In addition, it gives access to medical services before, during, and after delivery.

Today, 72 per cent of working women still do not enjoy maternity protection. These women often continue to work too far into pregnancy, putting their health and that of their unborn children at risk. Without income protection, mothers may start working too soon after childbirth, which often reduces the duration of breastfeeding.

Employer-financed maternity benefits can lead to discriminatory hiring practices, whereby employers are reluctant to hire young female workers. Domestic workers, agricultural workers, and women in the informal economy face the most adverse work conditions and are most likely to lack maternity coverage.

## IMPORTANCE OF PATERNITY CARE

Over the last few years, the involvement of fathers in caring for their babies has gained importance. Today, paternity leave is mandated in 94 countries, compared to only 40 countries in 1994. Although paternity leave is becoming increasingly common, the mandated leave period is often less than one week or unpaid.

Early involvement of fathers in caring for their children and taking up responsibilities at home has been proven to benefit the health and development of children and makes it easier for mothers to pursue jobs. This can encourage gender equality at home, which is the foundation of gender equality at work.



## JOINT UN RESPONSE

The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) advocate for maternity protection and paternity support for all through Goal 1.3 on social protection systems, including floors, and Goal 5.4 on gender equality and non-discrimination in the provision of services, infrastructure, and social protection policies. Social protection floors provide for maternity protection through guaranteeing access to care, basic income security, and essential health care, including maternity care, as set out in the ILO's Social Protection Floor Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202).

The ILO's Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), calls for 14 weeks of maternity leave with cash benefits to sustain mothers and children in good health and living conditions. Funding maternity and paternity leave through social insurance or public funds is essential to prevent discrimination and ensure that no one is left behind.

Inocência Chongo, like many female domestic workers in Mozambique, had to leave her job after becoming pregnant. The problem of job loss is very real and such women have little money or support to take care of themselves and their babies. To compound the problem, many have to start searching for new jobs soon after birth.

Since 2008, Mozambique has provided maternity leave and cash benefits to women working in the formal sector. This means 94 per cent of the female labour force – primarily working in agriculture and unpaid family work – remains uncovered. The situation is changing as Mozambique is currently working to extend the maternity leave and cash benefit system to informal sector workers and self-employed women.



### FROM RIGHT TO REALITY WITH YOUR SUPPORT

The ILO and its UN partners have extensive experience working as One to help countries extend maternity and paternity protection to all parents. With your support, we can ensure that more women, men, and children across the world are adequately protected.

You can support us to:

- Raise awareness by carrying out global and national campaigns on the importance of maternity and paternity protection and financing schemes through social insurance and public funds instead of through employer liability.

US\$ 200,000

- Support governments and national stakeholders to design and implement inclusive and sustainable maternity and paternity protection schemes.

US\$ 150,000 per country

- Gather evidence to guide policy and monitor progress through collecting and analysing information on maternity and paternity benefits and services across different national and workplace contexts, monitoring relevant SDG target indicators, and measuring impacts.

US\$ 250,000

- Develop capacities for action by building and improving evidence-based cost-assessment tools and training packages.

US\$ 300,000

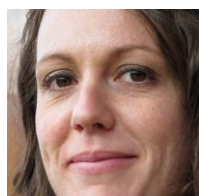
- Document and share good practices and lessons from countries through guides, brochures and videos.

US\$ 150,000

### LISTENING TO YOUR AMBITIONS

As a donor, you receive regular reports on the progress made and have access to ongoing project activities and performance indicators.

To further discuss your objectives and the ways in which you can improve millions of lives, you can contact:




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