



The challenge of providing universal maternity care in Coresia



Social protection programmes in the case of maternity

The Government has implemented various schemes that provide income security to people in the event of unemployment, sickness, maternity, disability, death, and work injury. These schemes come under the purview of the Ministries of Social Development, Labour, Planning, Health, Home Affairs and Finance.

Compulsory insurance programmes, which cater to civil servants, military personnel, and formal private sector employees, have been in existence for many years. The National Law for the Extension of Social Security (No. 293) enacted on 11 August 1995, provides a legal framework to design and implement a system to provide basic social security and welfare to all Coresian workers and their dependants. Although many people enjoy maternity benefits, most of the population does not have access to any scheme. Existing social protection programmes providing benefits for mother and childcare include:

- **“National Social Protection Programme (NSPP)”**: This is a compulsory programme, wherein all workers in private sector organizations of ten or more employees can avail maternity benefits for themselves, in case the insured person is female, or for their partners. The Ministry of Labour supervises the social protection fund and oversees the registration, contribution collection, and benefit payments for NSPP and the Childcare and Education programme. The contributions amount to 3 per cent of the wage by the employee, 3 per cent of the wage by the employer, and 3 per cent of the wage by the Government on a monthly basis. The maximum wage to be considered for calculation of contributions is COD20,000 per month. With this contribution, the beneficiaries receive child allowance, unemployment, disability, death, sickness, and maternity benefits. The scheme does not yet provide any paternity benefits. Maternity

benefits amount to a fixed payment of COD15,000 per delivery of a child (COD30,000 in case of twins). This amount is intended to provide financial support to the mother and child, ensuring proper childcare, nutrition, and the mother's well-being. This is in addition to the benefits under health insurance schemes. If the insured person is the mother, she receives a partial income replacement, which is 50 per cent of the wage for three months during the maternity leave. The maternity leave can be taken anytime during or immediately after the pregnancy. It is estimated that in 2011, the scheme had 5,503,084 members. This demonstrates that although the programme is compulsory, its enforcement has not been sufficiently strong. There is high social evasion by private sector employers under NSPP.

- **“Public Servants’ Social Protection Programme (PSP)”**: All civil servants, police and military personnel, and war veterans are compulsorily registered under PSP and are entitled to insurance benefits in the events of sickness, injury, disability, maternity, and death. The Ministry of Finance supervises the civil servants’ social protection fund and manages the PSP and the Civil Servants Child Education Programme. The two schemes are financed by bipartite contributions of 10 per cent of the salary, of which 5 per cent is paid by public servants and an equal amount by the Government. In 2011, membership to PSP was 2,421,687. Maternity benefits amount to a fixed payment of COD15,000 per delivery of a child (COD30,000 in case of twins). This amount is intended to provide financial support to the mother and child, ensuring proper childcare, nutrition, and the mother’s well-being. This is in addition to the benefits under health insurance schemes. If the insured person is the mother, she receives a partial income replacement, which is 50 per cent of the wage for three months during the maternity leave. The maternity leave can be taken anytime during or immediately after the pregnancy. The scheme does not yet provide any paternity benefits.
- **“Child and Mother Nutrition (CMN)”**: The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), in close partnership with the Ministry of Health, runs an assistance programme to provide a fortified mix of cereals and grains to pregnant women and mothers with children up to 4 years of age. The blended mix is distributed among women and children from poor households who are identified by their national ID card number and the associated database. This mix aims to provide necessary nutrients and energy. The ingredients are procured from Coresian farmers, mixed in local factories, and distributed in community health care centres. The CMN has been implemented as a pilot programme in a few provinces, and WFP expects that the Government will take over the expansion of the scheme to all provinces.
- **“Social Insurance Scheme for Self-employed and Informal Sector Workers and SME Employees (SIS)”**: Another scheme which targets self-employed and informal economy workers is the Social Insurance Scheme (SIS) for self-employed and informal sector workers, and SMEs with fewer than ten workers. It was launched in 2008 following the Ministry of Labour Regulation No. 173/2007 on ‘Providing Social Security and Health Care to workers in the informal sector as well as workers in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)’. Under this programme, informal sector workers can avail insurance benefits for sickness, work injury, disability, and death. The scheme does not yet provide any maternity or paternity benefits. The SIS fund is supervised by the Ministry of Labour. Contributions are on a fixed-rate basis. The insured person has the option to make payments at the rate of COD100 per month or COD200 per month. The contributions are matched by the employer (if applicable) and the Government. After a sharp increase in coverage, the total number of insured seems to have stabilized at around 800,000 people.

Growing challenges

Although the Government of Coresia aims to extend maternity protection as one of the measures to increase low fertility rates in Coresia, a sizeable portion of the female population still does not have access to these benefits.

The SIS scheme does not provide maternity benefits. Women in informal employment cannot claim a replacement income during pregnancy. This forces them to work until the last month and resume their job immediately after delivery to ensure that there is no loss of income. However, this is not good for the health of the women and newborn children. Also, the absence of a maternity benefit package makes the SIS scheme less attractive to female workers.

The Child and Mother Nutrition programme is funded by the WFP. Such donor-funded programmes need to be funded by Government revenues in order to have long-term financial sustainability. In addition, the CMN programme is still in the pilot phase in a few provinces only.

In the private formal sector, many employees claim not to have access to NSPP or to private insurance schemes, even though NSPP is a compulsory scheme. It has been found that employers often do not register their staff members under NSPP to avoid paying contributions. Monitoring and control mechanisms to check for social evasion and enforce the law are nearly absent. A common method of social evasion occurs when formal sector companies subcontract small companies with fewer than ten employees. Such companies are not covered by NSPP. It is important that the penalty for evasion by employers is made strict and enforceable and supervisory mechanisms to monitor registration and contributions are put in place.

Way forward

The Government is considering introducing a non-contributory maternity benefit scheme for all informal sector women. The benefit package will involve transfer of a fixed amount of cash. At present, two package options are being considered: COD4,000 and COD6,000 per newborn child. This amount is intended to provide financial support to the mother and child, ensuring proper childcare, nutrition, and the mother's well-being. This is in addition to the benefits under the non-contributory health care scheme, PHCP. Some NGOs, who fear that the Government will fail to index the lump-sum benefit on inflation, claim that the benefit package should be expressed as a percentage of the poverty line. A newly established information technology (IT) project will link delivery rooms in hospitals and clinics with the national database. The management information system (MIS) will automatically issue birth certificates. With this birth certificate, the parents of the newborn child will be able to claim the benefit. The Government is waiting for a cost estimate before making a decision on the introduction of one of the maternity benefit packages under discussion.

The legal framework

Table 17: Legal framework of social protection programmes in the case of maternity

Programme	Legal framework
National Social Protection Programme (NSPP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law No. 157/1984 on 'Ensuring worker health and safety' • Ministry of Labour Regulation No. 26/1985 on 'Social protection for workers' • National Law No. 293/1995 for the 'Extension of Social Security' and its amendments • Ministry of Labour Decree No. 245/2007 on 'Provision of maternity care'
Public Servants' Social Protection Programme (PSP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law No. 110/1973 on 'Welfare of civil servants, military, and veterans' • Ministry of Finance Regulation No. 10/1976 on 'Contributions to social insurance for civil servants' • Ministry of Finance Regulation No. 43/1981 on 'Extending social protection to police and military personnel'
Child and Mother Nutrition (CMN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Health Announcement dated 13 October 2010 on 'Providing essential nutrition to mothers with young children'
Social Insurance Scheme for Self-employed and Informal Sector Workers, and SME Employees (SIS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law No. 157/1984 on 'Ensuring worker health and safety' • National Law No. 293/1995 for the 'Extension of Social Security' and its amendments • Ministry of Labour Regulation No. 173/2007 on 'Providing social security and health care to workers in the informal sectors'



Questions:

Module 8 – Please complete the assessment matrix provided to you on the basis of the case. You are encouraged to discuss the case within your group and refer to the *World Café* reports while completing the matrix. Please keep in mind that you should address the issue of maternity only.

Module 10 – Please translate the recommendations of your group into three scenarios.

Module 11 – Please calculate the cost of implementation of each scenario. Your group is required to propose one scenario to the Government for implementation. Please keep in mind that the cost of implementing the scenario you propose should not exceed the budget allotted to your group in the *Jeopardy* and *Who wants to be a protectionaire?* games. Strengthen your proposition by linking the cost of implementation to economic indicators such as GDP.

Module 14 – Please develop an advocacy campaign to lobby for one or several policy options and gain support for the endorsement and implementation of your recommendations.

Assumptions for costing (for facilitators to provide to their groups)

Table 18: Share of formal and informal employment

Share of formal employment	37.7%
Share of informal employment	62.3%

We assume that the share of informal sector births is 62.3 per cent of the total number of births and that this percentage remains constant for all years until 2020.

The administration cost of providing maternity benefits to the informal sector is assumed to be 5 per cent of the cost of benefits due to the newly established IT project.