

however, maternity leave is unpaid, paid at less than two-thirds of previous earnings or paid for a period of less than 14 weeks.

Among the 16 Eastern European and Central Asian countries analysed, all meet the standards established by Convention No. 183, while 14 countries exceed the duration and payment standards in this Convention. The majority of the 29 Developed Economies assessed<sup>42</sup> also meet the standards of Convention No. 183 in both areas, with 25 countries meeting or exceeding the standards. About 14 per cent of these countries provide lower cash benefits than Convention No. 183 calls for (Canada, Iceland, Slovakia – although the level of benefit is set at 65 per cent instead of two-thirds – and the United States). As noted, lack of comprehensive information on countries with flat-rate or capped benefits prevented the assessment of conformity in 13 of the countries and territories in this region.<sup>43</sup>

Nearly all of the African countries calculate maternity benefits as a percentage of prior earnings. The exceptions are Seychelles, which pays women a flat-rate benefit.<sup>44</sup> Of the 51 African countries assessed, 20 countries (39 per cent) provided for at least two-thirds of earnings for 14 weeks. Of these, the Democratic Republic of the Congo pays two-thirds of prior earnings for 14 weeks, while Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Comoros, Congo (15 weeks), Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Senegal, Togo and Zimbabwe all pay 100 per cent of earnings for 14 weeks. Among the remaining countries that do not provide at least two-thirds of earnings for 14 weeks, some, such as Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone and Sudan, pay 100 per cent of prior earnings, but for a period of less than 14 weeks (60 days, 12 weeks and eight weeks, respectively). Others provide at least 14 weeks of maternity leave, but with lower levels of compensation. For example, the Central African Republic provides 14 weeks of leave paid at 50 per cent of earnings.

Of the 34 Latin American and Caribbean countries, 33 calculate benefits as a percentage of earnings without a ceiling. Among those, only seven countries meet or exceed the standards on duration and level of pay. Belize, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Panama and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela provide at least 14 weeks of leave paid at 100 per cent of prior earnings.<sup>45</sup> Many of the remaining countries

provide at least two-thirds of earnings, but for a period of less than 14 weeks. For example, Barbados, Ecuador, Honduras and Mexico provide 12 weeks at 100 per cent of earnings. Jamaica and Puerto Rico provide 100 per cent of previous earnings for eight weeks. Bolivia uses a flat rate benefit (at the minimum wage level) plus 70 per cent of the difference between minimum wage and regular earnings for 12 weeks.

All but one of the 26 Asian countries studied provide benefits as a percentage of prior earnings. The exception is Papua New Guinea, where maternity leave is unpaid. Of the other 25 countries considered, five provide at least two-thirds of earnings for 14 weeks: Mongolia provides 70 per cent of earnings for 120 days, China provides 100 per cent for 14 weeks, Singapore and Bangladesh provide 16 weeks at 100 per cent of earnings, and Viet Nam provides 100 per cent of earnings for 26 weeks. Among the remaining countries, a large number provide at least two-thirds of earnings during maternity leave, but for less than 14 weeks: Afghanistan (90 days), Brunei Darussalam (eight weeks), Hong Kong, China (ten weeks), India (13 weeks), the Islamic Republic of Iran (90 days), Nepal (52 days) and Vanuatu (12 weeks). Countries providing both lower levels of earnings and fewer than 14 weeks' benefit include Cambodia (13 weeks at 50 per cent), Kiribati (12 weeks at 25 per cent) and the Solomon Islands (12 weeks at 25 per cent).

All of the 12 Middle Eastern countries assessed calculate benefits based on prior earnings. Of these 12 countries, only Syria meets the ILO standards by providing for 120 days and 100 per cent of earnings (but only for the first child).<sup>46</sup> Nearly all of the remaining countries provide 100 per cent of earnings but do so for fewer than 14 weeks, with the exception of Saudi Arabia, which pays 50 per cent of a woman's wage if she has been with the employer for at least 1 year and 100 per cent if she has been with the same employer for at least 3 years, which is not in line with the principles of ILO Conventions.