

Box 2.4 Examples of non-contributory maternity cash benefits

In **New Zealand**, women who have been working for the same employer for at least six months before the expected date of childbirth, including at least one hour a week or 40 hours a month, are entitled to 100 per cent of previous earnings up to a ceiling of around US\$ 400 gross earnings a week, for 14 weeks. Self-employed workers who have been working for at least six months for at least ten hours a week receive 100 per cent of self-employed workers' average weekly earnings or US\$ 130 per week. An alternative means-tested benefit may be paid to all residents in New Zealand with at least 2 years of continuous residence, including the unemployed. When a person is more than 26 weeks pregnant and unable to work due to her pregnancy, she may be eligible for cash benefits at sickness rate (around US\$ 250 net per week for single women). This payment may continue for up to 13 weeks after childbirth. For citizens or permanent residents with less than 2 years of residence in New Zealand, a benefit payment may be made in cases of hardship. For non-permanent residents, an income- and asset-tested emergency benefit may be paid in cases of hardship. The total cost of these cash benefits is financed by the Government from general revenues.

In **Croatia**, employees, including vocational trainees, salaried full-time apprentices and temporary contract workers and self-employed persons, are entitled to 58 weeks' maternity leave. Until the end of the mandatory maternity leave period (until the child reaches 6 months of age) the salary compensation is paid at 100 per cent of the insured's monthly earnings by the Croatian Health Insurance Fund. The maternity benefit for the remainder of the non-mandatory maternity leave period (until the child reaches 1 year of age) is paid at a flat rate

(the equivalent of US\$ 300–450 a month) by the State budget.

In **Singapore**, workers are entitled to 16 weeks' maternity leave at 100 per cent of previous earnings. For the first and second child, the employer pays for the first eight weeks and can claim reimbursement from the Government, up to a ceiling, for the final eight weeks. For the third child and subsequent children, the Government pays the entire 16-week period, up to a ceiling.

Portugal recently introduced legislation that provides income assistance to women who do not qualify for benefits under the social insurance system and are financially vulnerable. It establishes a new subsidy, provided out of social assistance funds, that is granted throughout the duration of maternity leave and amounts to 80 per cent of the social support index.

The Bolsa Família programme in **Brazil** makes conditional cash transfers to 11.3 million Brazilian families (one-quarter of the population) at a cost of US\$ 4.5 billion, or 0.4 per cent of GDP, in this upper middle-income country.* About 93 per cent of recipients are female, and 27 per cent are single mothers. Payments are conditional on pregnant women undergoing prenatal and postnatal tests and on parents sending children to school and having them vaccinated. The eligibility threshold is set at approximately one-quarter of the monthly minimum wage, or 40 per cent of the urban poverty line (US\$ 52 in 2007). Extremely poor families receive a monthly amount ranging from the local equivalent of US\$ 27–79, while poor households receive US\$ 17–52. Evidence shows that the programme has significantly reduced poverty and raised the social status of poor women.

* According to the World Bank's "World Development Indicators" (available at <http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators> [26 Mar. 2014]), in 2009 Brazil had a per capita Gross National Income (GNI) of US\$ 8,040.

Source: ILO Working Conditions Laws Database. ILO, 2009. CEACR, Observation, C103, Portugal, 2008; *Bolsa Família in Brazil: Context, concept, and impacts* (Geneva, 2009).

National practice

As shown in figure 2.4, 58 per cent of the 185 countries and territories surveyed provide cash benefits through national social security schemes (107 countries).⁵⁰ In 25 per cent of the total (47 countries), benefits are paid solely by the employer. In 16 per cent of surveyed countries, employers and social security systems share the cost of cash maternity benefits (29 countries). Benefits are not paid in two countries (1 per cent).

Regional differences between the parties responsible for paying cash benefits are striking. In the Developed Economies, benefits are paid through social security systems in 88 per cent of the countries, with no countries relying solely on employers as the direct source of cash benefits. In Malta, employers fully cover 14 weeks of leave, while social insurance provides a four-week flat-rate "maternity leave benefit" (at approximately US\$ 220 per week). Three other countries (Denmark,